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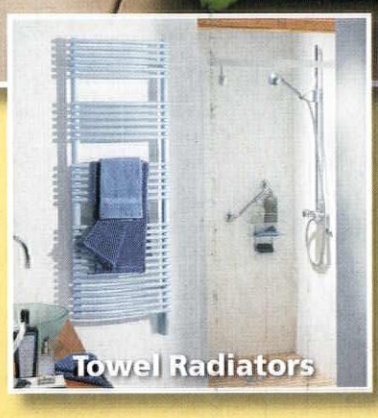
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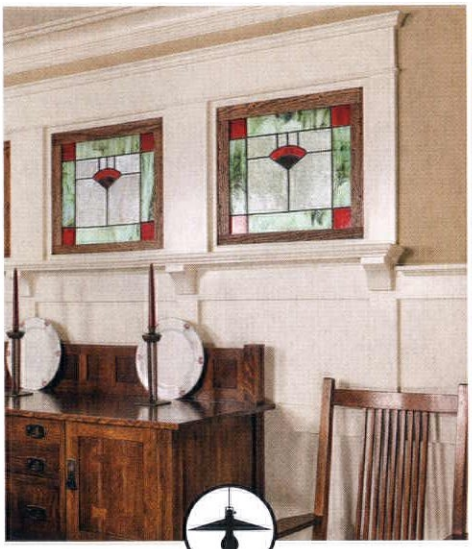
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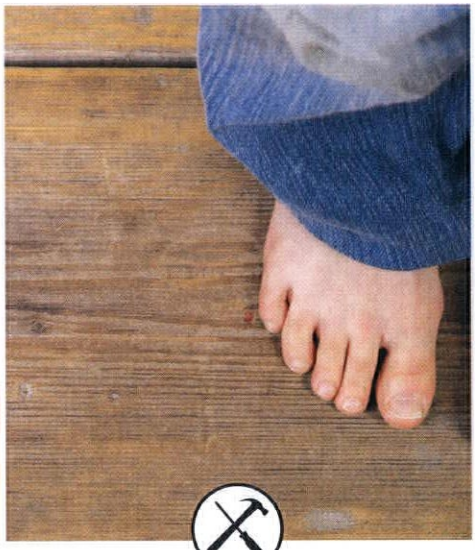
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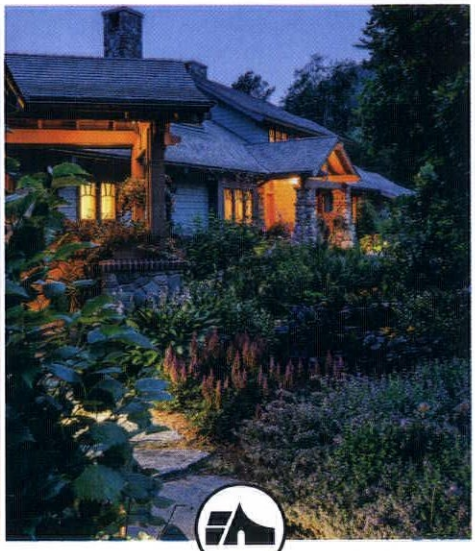
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ON THE COVER Fine details and a warm ambiance pervade a new old house.
PHOTO BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK; SEE PAGE 98.







TOP TO BOTTOM MCM tracts yield surprises: a 1951 Wright-designed house in Minneapolis. A mid-century Cliff May house in Columbus, Ohio, is a familiar type. Window wall and courtyard in Seattle. A sprawling 1952 Ranch in Des Moines.



Into the future past

It was fully 20 years ago that the thought struck me: *Suburban ranch neighborhoods are now desirable.* I was taking a long walk in a leafy suburb between New York City and Princeton, N.J., a place of old farms that had been developed after the second war and through the 1960s. The sun-dappled streets, curved in the manner of Olmsted's and Vaux's parks, were embowered by tall trees on each side, which met overhead. Each green, roughly same-size lot was neatly kept, each house set back at a private and dignified distance. Rhododendrons had matured and naturalized. To my surprise, the mid-century houses my parents had disparaged (my mother preferred Colonials) were not all alike after all; cladding materials, entries, wings, and landscape varied. Consistent massing and heights gave the neighborhood an identity and feeling of serenity.

The October 1998 issue of *Old-House Journal* marked our 25th anniversary. In a birthday mood, we heralded the Ranch as a historic house style. The Arts & Crafts revival was in full swing and the Bungalow (1900–1925) would be the next decade's restoration darling. Outside of academia and a few pockets of enthusiasts, the old-house audience was vocal in its insistence that anything postwar was suspect.

This issue marks 45 years of OHJ. Among the tours we feature is a visit to a glass-walled, 1957 house in California. The accompanying style article provides a context for Mid-Century Modern houses, of which the Western Ranch and its variants is one type. My own feelings about all those ranches and Contemporaries of the Sixties have changed. I've been introduced to well-designed mid-century enclaves not only in New Jersey but also in Minneapolis, Des Moines, Palo Alto, and Seattle.



Imagine big windows, a now-familiar and livable modernism, and no clutter! Imagine having a private stone patio instead of a wood porch that always needs work. Imagine neighborhoods where that postwar optimism seems embodied still.

I think I am in love.



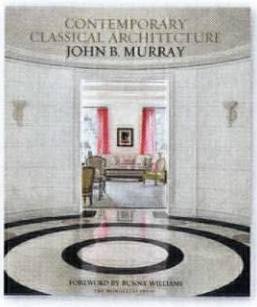
SIDE NOTES

NEW CLASSICS

A new monograph showcasing the work of New York-based architecture firm John B. Murray is a refreshing reminder that classical architecture is alive and well. Their mastery of the vocabulary and sensitivity to proportion is evident in 15 residential projects that range from new country homes and a preserved barn to sensitive additions and prewar apartments in Manhattan. Collaboration with landscape designers, artisans, and builders assures "a simplicity of form and supreme craftsmanship" in work that interprets classical details.

Murray, recipient of multiple Stanford White and Palladio architecture awards, has worked with leading interior designers on these contemporary classics. Never antiquated or stodgy, the rooms are gracious, peaceful, and often playful.

Contemporary Classical Architecture: John B. Murray
by Elizabeth Brooke Murray
Monacelli Press, Sept. 2018
256 pp., $65





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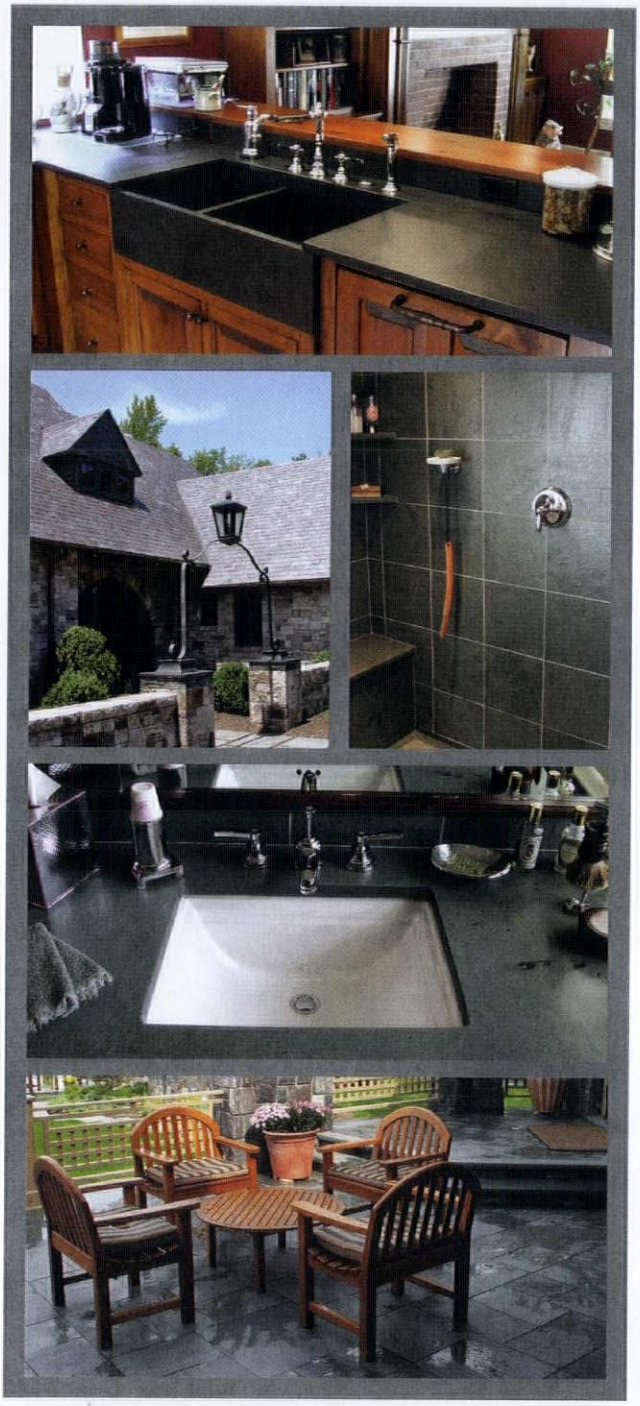
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Tucked Away

There's never enough storage. We found clever ways to address the age-old problem.

By Mary Ellen Polson



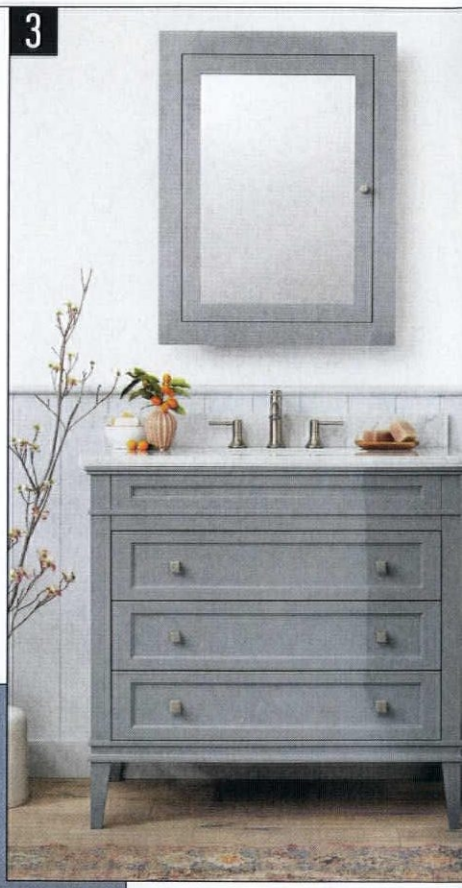
1. PETITE ISLAND

The Shaker-inspired Cottage Island comes with a curly-maple countertop and two pass-through dovetailed drawers. Available in a choice of paint and finish, it measures 36" high x wide x 22" deep. $1,250. Workshops of David T. Smith, (513) 932-2472, *davidtsmith.com*



2. CANVAS ROLLER

With origins that date to the 1920s, the 3-bushel round carry truck makes a perfect laundry basket. Stoutly crafted of canvas with a choice of vinyl or leather trim and non-marking casters, it measures 25" x 25" x 23" deep. $124.90–$144.90. Steele Canvas Basket, (800) 541-8929, *steelcanvas.com*



3. FOR THE BATH

In fashionable Empire Gray, the 30" Laurel vanity offers two full-extension, dovetailed drawers that wrap around the plumbing chase for optimal storage. With recessed drawer faces and tapered legs, the 20"-deep vanity comes with a Carrara marble top and ceramic sink. $2,973. Ronbow, (888) 880-8318, *ronbow.com*

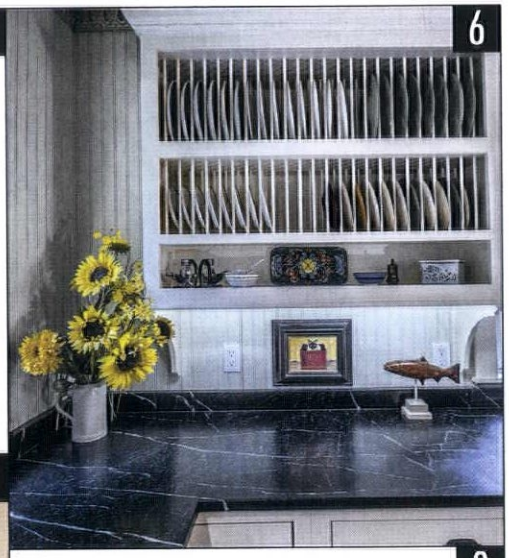


4. WOOD, REPURPOSED

Made from walnut reclaimed from 19th-century buildings, this cubby holds spices, bath necessities, or three mason jars per row. The tung oil-finished shelf measures 16" high x 12" wide x 4 ¼" deep. It comes with hanging hardware. $180. Food52, *food52.com*



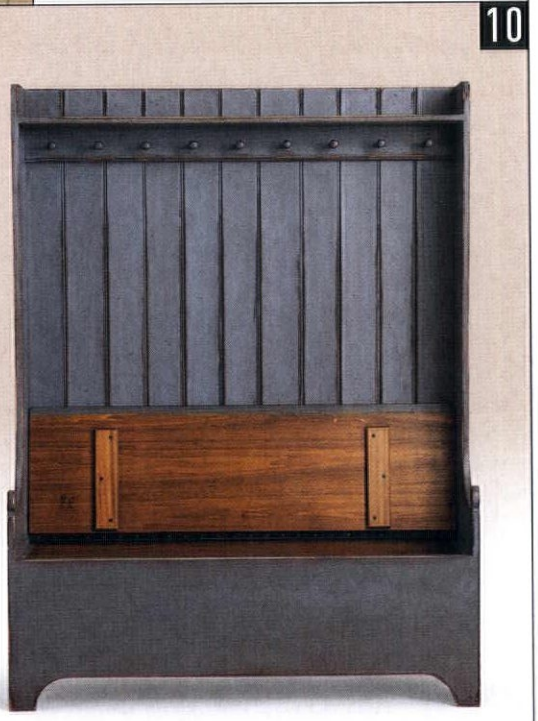












5. VINTAGE WINE CABINET
An original design based on 18th-century cabinetry, the two-drawer wine console holds 18 bottles. Shown in tiger maple in the Olde Amber finish, the console measures 37 ½" high x 32 ½" wide x 15 ¾" deep. $3,500. D.R. Dimes, (603) 942-8050, *drdimes.com*

6. PLATES FOR DAYS
Add a bespoke plate rack that holds service for 24. It was one element of a new kitchen retrofit done in turn-of-the-20th-century style with bracketed supports. Custom price. The Kennebec Company, (207) 443-2131, *kennebec company.com*

7. STAIRCASE SPACESAVER
Here's an idea for that tight space under a back stair: add double ovens and storage. Face-frame cabinets with square insets are designed in Craftsman style. Custom price. Crown Point Cabinetry, (800) 999-4994, *crown-point.com*

8. TOWELS AT HAND
Inspired by vintage coiled-rope baskets, the Fresh Towels basket is studio-made from cotton rope covered in beautifully hand-dyed, all-cotton fabric sewn in an oval shape. Just one of many unique designs, it measures 15 ¼" wide x 10 ½" high x 8 ¾" deep. $99. Laura Loxley, *lauraloxley.com*

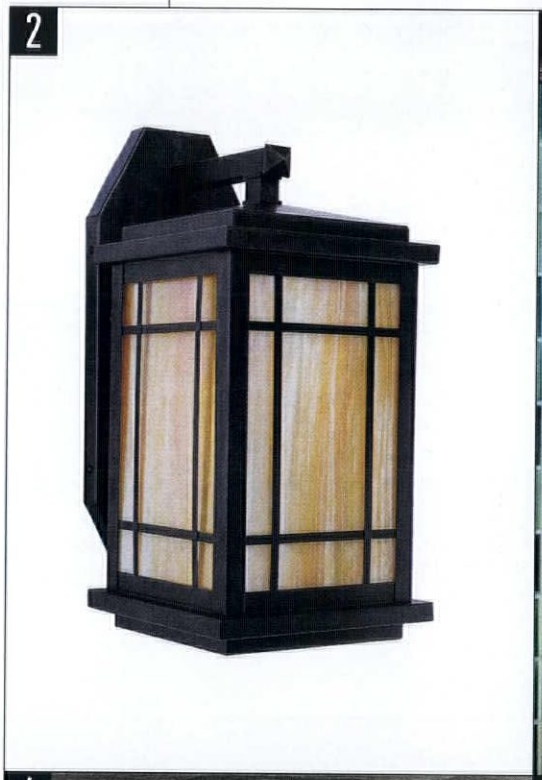
9. RACK 'EM UP
Stow and hang towels using minimal wall space with the Adelaide towel rack, accented with decorative finials. Measuring 25 ¾" wide x 9 ¾" wide x 5 ¼" high, it comes in brushed nickel (shown), polished brass, chrome, and two shades of oil-rubbed bronze. $69.95–$79.95. Signature Hardware, (866) 855-2284, *signaturehardware.com*

10. ALL-IN-ONE BENCH
In a historical finish, the Lancaster Hall Tree has a bench seat with concealed storage, a high pegboard for hanging coats, a top shelf for hats and gloves. It measures 72" high x 54" wide x 18 ¼" deep. $2,250. Great Windsor Chairs, (800) 240-6433, *greatwindsorchairs.com*

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1. LONG-STEM ROSES
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2. ON THE GRID
With familiar crossed-muntin corners, the Avenue outdoor wall light comes in a dozen finishes and many glass options. Shown in a bronze finish with gold-white iridescent glass, the fixture measures 15 ½" high x 8" wide x 9 ¼" deep. $430–$442. Arroyo Craftsman Lighting, (626) 960-9411, *arroyocraftsman.com*

3. TILE WAINSCOT
The lustrous green 4x4 hand-painted field tiles in this Midwest bath are inset with a two-piece, hand-painted Nouveau tulip deco; all available in glaze colors of your choice. Field tile $46 per square foot. Deco set $90. North Prairie Tileworks, (612) 871-3421, *handmadetile.com*

4. RETURN ROCKET
The Rocket vase is a faithful reproduction of a historic vase sculpted by Fernand Moreau for Teco (1899–1920). The vase comes in white or green and measures 8" high x 3 ½" wide. $85. Prairie Mod, (800) 594-3148, *prairiemod.com*

5. LIGHT THROUGH COLOR
Laylights are decorative glass panels set into the ceiling to diffuse light into the room below. This Prairie-style design is loosely inspired by the work of Purcell and Elmslie. Priced by project. Theodore Ellison Designs, (510) 534-7632, *theodoreellison.com*



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Carpet: The Stephanotis Flower (PC-4A) Image: From the collection of Scott and Lou Segner

Towers and Turrets

Victorian and Romantic houses might boast the picturesque glory of a "lookout," as these beauties do.

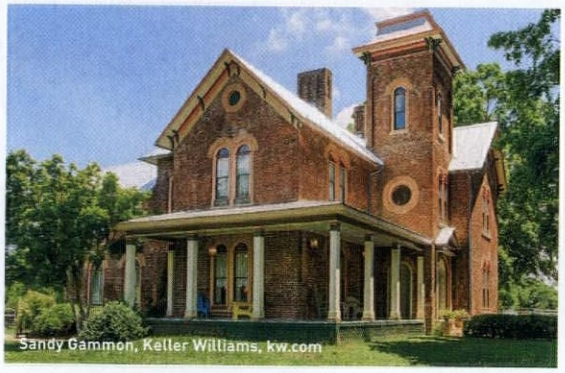
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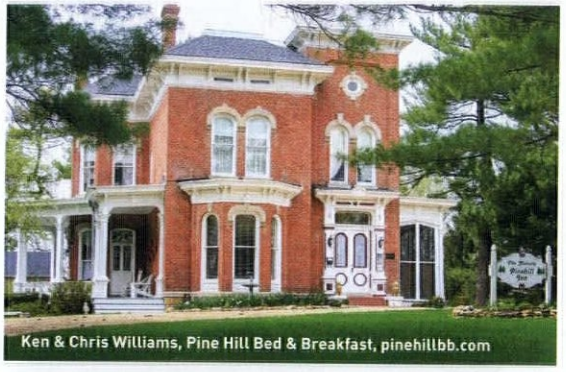
WYOMING, OH / $749,000
A steep shingled roof, an ogee arch at the entry, and French bay windows mark this 1934 house as Norman Revival; the side turret with conical roof is its most romantic detail. Arched passageways, a wrought-iron staircase, casement windows and French doors, and multiple fireplaces await.


Cynthia Shoemaker-Zerrer, Callaway-Henderson Sothebys, callawayhenderson.com

LAMBERTVILLE, NJ / $950,000
A Queen Anne built with Tuscan Revival touches in 1873, this grand dame got a Second Empire tower and mansard roof in 1884. Inside: high ceilings, six-panel chestnut doors, random-width pine floors, stained glass, and an original staircase. Even the service areas retain period charm.


Sandy Gammon, Keller Williams, kw.com

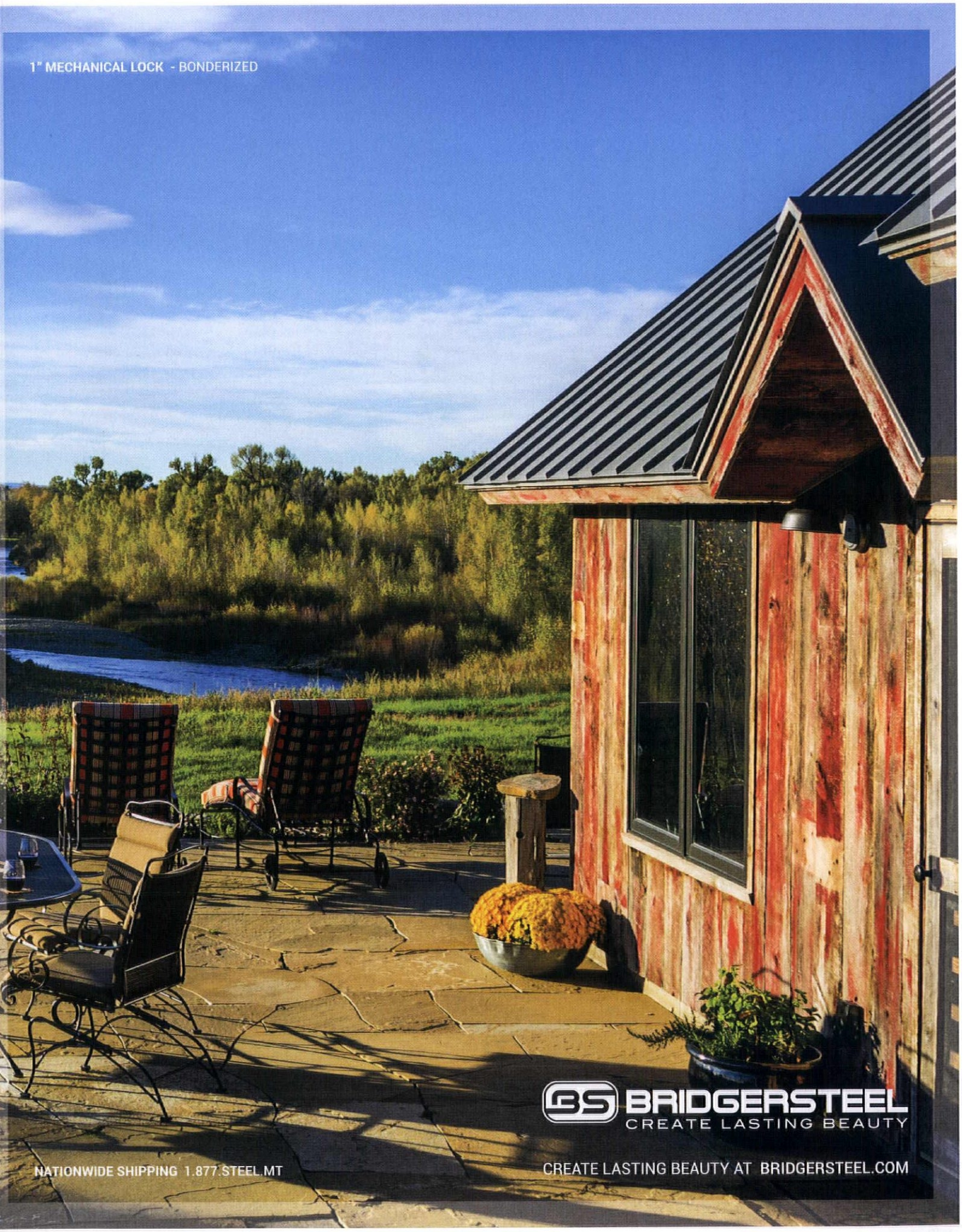
TALBOTT, TN / $625,000
Built in 1881 with 14"-thick walls, this brick Italianate has a piazza supported by square columns and a square tower with a concave mansard roof. Inside find a grand entry with staircase, crystal and gaslight-style chandeliers, and original woodwork.


Ken & Chris Williams, Pine Hill Bed & Breakfast, pinehillbb.com

OREGON, IL / $682,000
An 1874 Italian Villa (now a b&b inn) hits style hallmarks with the *campanile* (tower), doubled brackets, and hooded, round-arch windows. Interior accents include recessed niches, hooded door casings, a graceful staircase, and marble fireplaces.


Ted Wright, Dielmann Sotheby's, dielmannsothebysrealty.com

ST. LOUIS, MO / $995,000
This dramatic 1891 Richardsonian Romanesque home boasts a massive tower, conical roof, and a broad Roman arch. Inside find a carved stone fireplace surround, colonnaded passageways, inlaid wood floors, leaded- and stained-glass windows.


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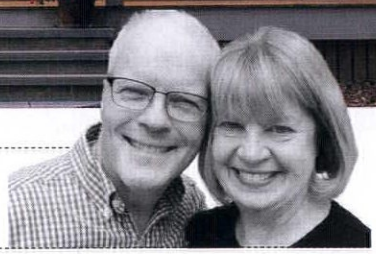


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This transitional Victorian house is better than net-zero in energy consumption—and *very* comfortable. **By Stewart W. Herman, Minneapolis, Minn.**

Our intention: turn an average old house, on a standard urban lot in a very cold city, into an affordable place to live, combining net-zero energy consumption with creature comforts and the ability to "age in place."

Our daughter found this house in Minneapolis, where Linda and I intended to move after retirement; it was in foreclosure, had basement water damage, and had an unfortunate rear addition with a mismatched roof pitch. It was in need of renovation. Linda was, at first, not so sure about "net zero." She assumed that both aesthetics and comfort would be compromised in the quest for super-efficiency. Nor was I sure that, once the numbers were crunched, reaching net zero in an old house on a small city lot would be feasible, or affordably so. So we hired Marc Sloot of SALA Architects, who has experience in green building. "It wasn't just about reaching energy goals," Sloot says. "It was also about preserving a 1907 house and keeping the character of the neighborhood." Sean Morrissey (Morrissey Builders, St. Paul), also with considerable experience in sustainable construction, was hired as general contractor.

After a 15-month renovation, the result was an all-electric house that surpassed net zero—producing 17,000 solar kW hours but using



ABOVE The 1907 late-Queen Anne cottage, which had previously been remodeled and its porch enclosed, has elements of Victorian and Free Classic design. Inside, the Arts & Crafts-leaning woodwork was retained.

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- New roofing system insulated to R-80 and **supporting 42 solar collectors**; an additional **12 collectors are on the garage**
- Captured heat: exhaust from baths and kitchen warms incoming outside air through an **enthalpy recovery ventilator** (ERV); excess heat from **geothermal heat exchanger** pre-heats water; water heater heat pump captures heat from basement air
- **Triple-glazed windows** cut down on heat transfer in all seasons
- Result year one is net-positive: electricity consumption 12,000 kW hours with **17,000 kW hours generated** by solar panels









ABOVE CertainTeed roofing shingles offer solar reflection to lower energy costs. Andersen triple-glazed windows manage the amount of heat generated by solar energy. Sherwin-Williams acrylic-latex paint provides mold and moisture resistance. Insulating was done from the outside during a major renovation. **TOP CENTER** A small, two-storey bump-out at the rear yielded a mudroom, an owners' suite above, and this sunroom. With super-insulation and triple glazing, the room is comfortable even in winter.

only 12,000. It has 54 solar panels, four 25-foot-deep geothermal wells, and super-insulation. The house is heated with the wattage equivalent of a blow dryer.

We sell the surplus energy to our utility. In the first year, the system produced about $3,000 worth of electricity, yielding a return of about 7% on the initial investment of $40,000 (after the federal tax credit). And we have the satisfaction of knowing that we rescued and improved a sound, 111-year-old house.

Because of housing density and existing trees, "passive solar was out of the picture here," our architect explains. "To get to net zero, we had to reduce energy consumption drastically, relying on the performance of the structure and systems. "In addition, solar exposure on the main roof and the garage roof would allow for installation of photovoltaic panels to produce electricity."

From the street, the house looks like a Victorian cottage, albeit brand new. A passerby isn't aware of new energy technologies. Inside, the house is filled with original woodwork that was saved and reused, while new millwork in sustainable lumber was faithfully copied. (The previous rear addition had been poorly constructed and had no detail.) Structural problems—including the broken roof line and floor









BELOW Cambria quartz countertops, Marmoleum flooring, Energy Star-rated appliances, and cabinets made from sustainable wood species are practical and classic. **MIDDLE** The floor plan was reconfigured with a new staircase. **BOTTOM** New woodwork is reused or reclaimed birch and maple.





comfort

- **Constant temperature** with no need for nightly setbacks at thermostat
- Continual **fresh air**, conditioned through a heat exchanger: no need to open windows
- Gentle forced-air heat, auto-regulated to a **comfortable humidity**
- **No drafts or cold spots**, thanks to super-insulation and an envelope that meets the passive-house standard for infiltration
- No combustion in the house, **reducing dust** to a minimum (we dust once a month, if that)
- A four-season sunroom owing to **triple-glazed windows**
- Little to **no condensation** on window glass, thanks to a 60% outside/40% inside insulation split at the vapor barrier
- Absorption of formaldehyde into **specialty wallboard**, rendering it inert
- Hot water arrives at any faucet within five seconds, thanks to a **recirculation loop**
- A never-depleted supply of hot water from a **heat pump-driven water heater**
- **Basement temperature of 64°** without supplemental heating, due to cocoon method of insulating the basement exterior to R-30 (without disturbing flowerbeds)
- Triple glazing substantially **reduces outside noise**

Handcrafted Copper in the Arts & Crafts Style

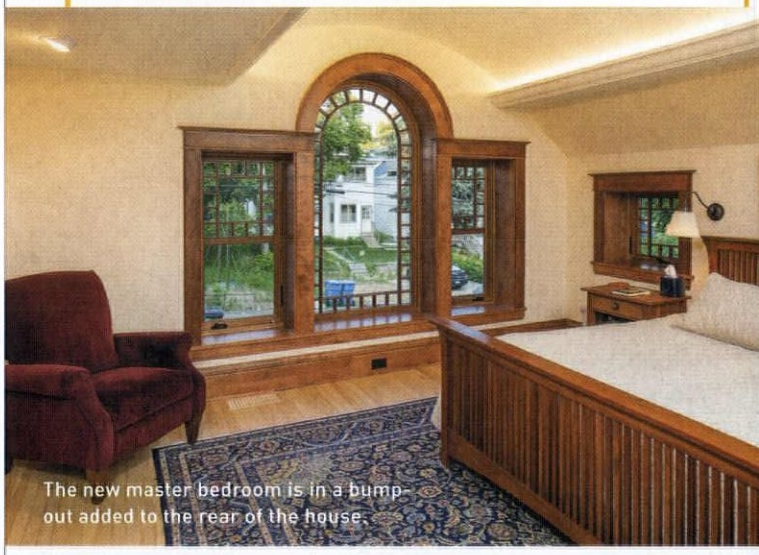


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- Staircase can accommodate a **stair elevator**
- **Grab bars** in shower and tubs, along with easy-to-clean **wall-mounted toilets**
- **Soft-close** pullouts and drawers in cabinets
- Washer and dryer comfortably raised 12" above floor and served by **a laundry chute**
- **Bright LED lighting** throughout, including in closets, and sensor lighting outside



The new master bedroom is in a bump-out added to the rear of the house.

levels that didn't match—were addressed. The much-improved interior now has a bright kitchen, an owners' suite, two offices, and a sunroom.

Retrofitting always has its challenges, but solutions are multiplying. For example, take the foundation insulation, which a tight house needs. Insulating on the inside isn't very effective. The house is on a narrow lot with little distance from the neighbors, so using a backhoe to excavate would be impossible. Our crew used the "cocoon method," hydro-vacuuming a five-inch trench next to the foundation, then inserted a two-inch foam sheet and sprayed expanded polystyrene (EPS) insulation. Without removing much dirt, the effect is R-30.

The old roof on the balloon-framed house was undersized, so we built a new roof of plywood I-beams over it. The spaces between are filled with 10 inches of foam, insulating the roof to R-80. It supports 42 solar collectors, thanks to a laminated beam running the length of the attic, which workers installed by hand (as six 300-lb. pieces) rather than by crane. The beam rests on steel posts that invisibly run through walls to foundations in the basement. Where there's a will there's a way.

Our house has been certified LEED Platinum as well as net-zero by the International Living Future Institute. When I reviewed the lists in the journals, it became clear that ours is the only 100+-year-old house to receive both certifications.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 119.

YOUR OLD HOUSE DESERVES *More Than Ordinary* DOORS



Vintage Doors By YesterYear's

Great *"Welcome Home"* moments start here.

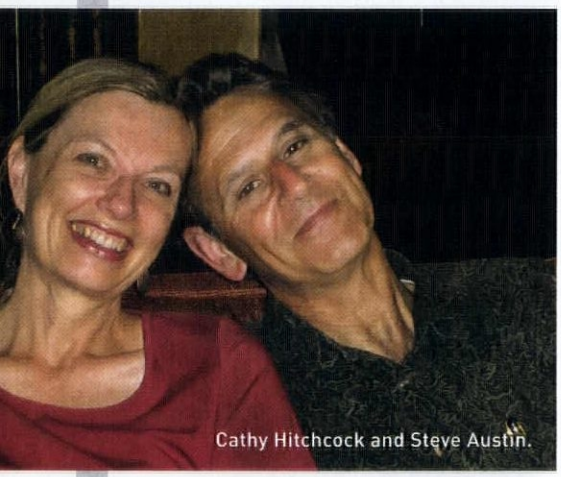
It is this moment that creates a ***real*** warmth our families love returning to and our friends look forward to visiting. Great doors, like great homes, carry lasting memories across time. That's why many of us recall *the good ol' days*, where life felt complete by the simple sound of an old-fashioned screen door slamming (with an honest-to-goodness satisfying slap!). But what exactly makes one door *extra-ordinary* and memorable, while others remain commonplace? Timeless design, careful craftsmanship and ***real wood*** construction—providing lasting stability and meaning to what otherwise would just be an object. ***Your home deserves more than ordinary doors!***

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OHJ Serial Restorers

This October, *Old-House Journal* celebrates its 45th Anniversary—and many readers have been along for the ride! A recent survey told us that and also gave us these stats: • 10% of readers are serial restorers who have restored three or more houses • 8½% are in the building trades • 30% have a professional or civic involvement in renovation or historic preservation • 65% of respondents say they are well versed in renovation basics. We decided to go looking for our "serial restorers," inviting them to submit photos and thoughts on the journey. Find some of their stories at oldhousejournal.com/articles/serial-restorers. In the meantime, what follows is an old-house love story. **By Patricia Poore**



Cathy Hitchcock and Steve Austin.

WELL INTO ADULTHOOD, Cathy Hitchcock and her husband, Steve Austin, went back to school, Cathy for a master's in social work and Steve for a doctorate in naturopathic medicine. When they finished, in 1985, restoring a Victorian was the last thing on their minds. But "it was all we could afford," Cathy says—they paid $30,000 for a tiny fixer-upper. An old Portland (Oregon) City Directory listed the 800-sq.ft. house as a "common laborer's home." Steve preferred "vest-pocket Victorian" for the 1899 cottage.

The couple thought they'd just clean it up and sell it in a few years. But enthusiasm kept them here; they would often redo a project until they got it right. "We learned from plenty of mistakes," Cathy says. Off came red siding and the ersatz-Colonial door. Gone was the high-gloss pink that had been painted right over peeling wallpaper.

A collection of Victorian antiques began to grow. Fringed portières of cut velvet and chenille were hung in double swags. A local artisan was commissioned to create stained-glass windows in the style of the famous Victorian-era Povey brothers. Austin and Hitchcock ended up with a Victorian jewel box that was the talk of the neighborhood. Steve's passion for research and the couple's example set off a wave of restoration fever.

The couple moved to Galveston, Texas, in 2008—just as Hurricane Ike sped toward Texas, where it would make a direct hit on Galveston Island. While Portland friends were horrified, folks in Galveston thought them lucky: Although the 1907 house they'd purchased was badly damaged, the moving van full of antiques was still safely 50 miles away. Two days later, the stock market crashed and a housing bust ensued.

Steve and Cathy had to curtail plans for restoration. "Oddly, that became a blessing," Cathy says. "We stenciled several rooms that were to have been papered with expensive wallpapers. We dropped a plan to add a modern pantry, and instead did an authentic re-creation of a turn-of-the century kitchen. The result was our most authentic interior."

This house was actually more typical of 19th-century Southern town houses, with a plan that remained popular in Galveston into the early 20th century. Late-Victorian decorating conventions were used throughout.

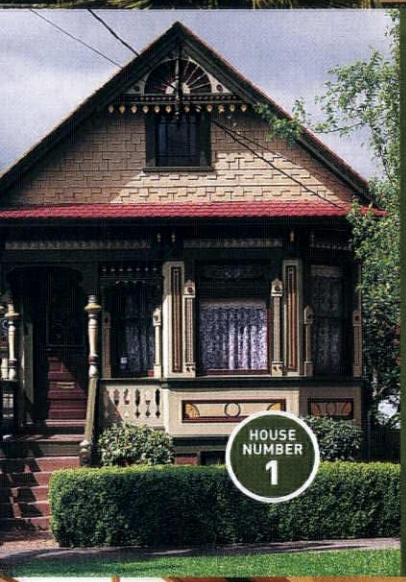
The Austin-Hitchcocks won a preservation award from the Galveston Historic Foundation. When they decided to move back to Portland, miraculously they found a buyer who appreciated their vision for the house, authentic kitchen and all. "He said he *wanted* to live in a museum," Steve told us then.

Next the couple moved into a white-box condo apartment in a good pre-war building. They sold off Victorian furniture. But "we kept our 19th-century Chinese and Japanese collections," Cathy explains. "We envisioned an 'Eclectic Oriental' approach. Our Meiji-era (1868–1912) pieces are timeless."

Soon the serial restorers were in a small 1920 bungalow in Portland. Plain wood trim, already painted black, fit well with an Asian aesthetic. "We'd started out with Japanese pieces," Cathy says, "then incorporated them as exotica in our Victorian houses, and returned to an appropriate Japanese aesthetic in this Arts & Crafts-era bungalow."

Cathy reports that she's "happily ensconced in the Portland bungalow, retired, playing mah jongg, and studying Japanese flower arranging—*ikebana*." Steve Austin passed away in March of this year. Their friendship with Donna Pizzi and Philip Clayton-Thompson of Blackstone Edge Studios assured that Steve's legacy with Cathy has been preserved: Philip had photographed their projects for almost 25 years.

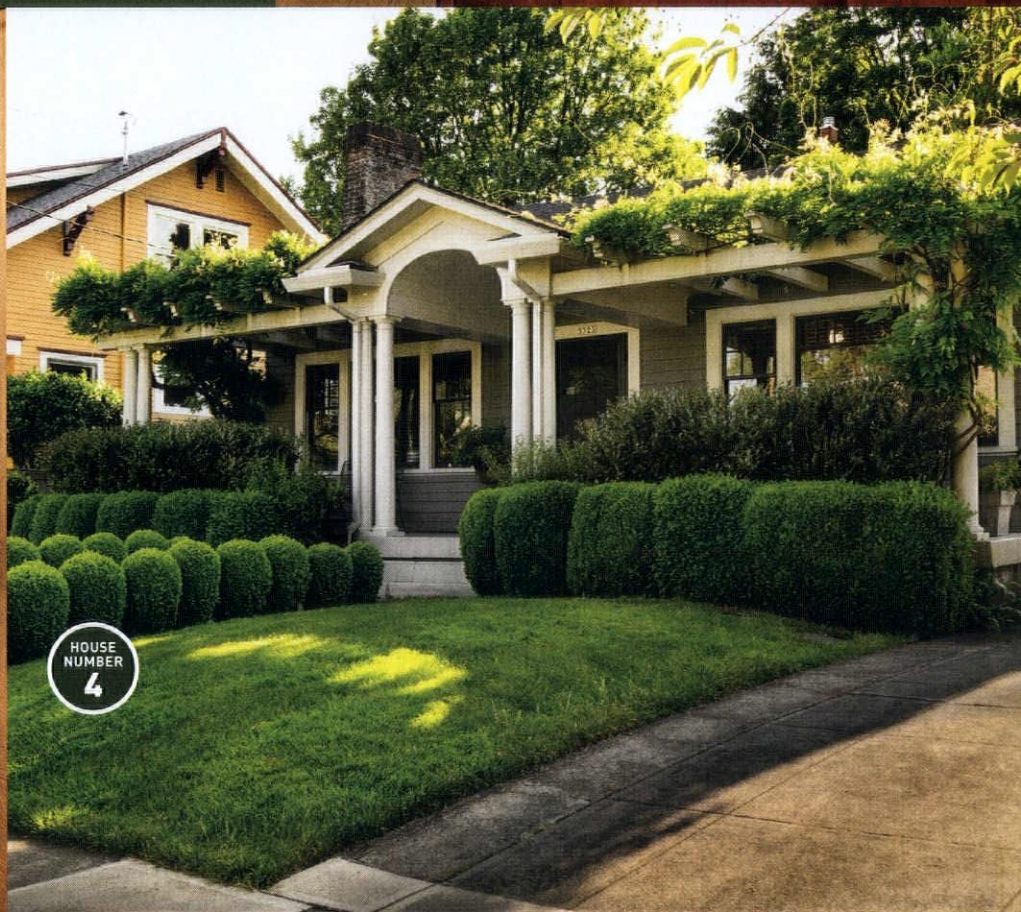




CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT An 800-square-foot Victorian cottage in Portland, Oregon, was the couple's first restoration project. • Next came a 1907 town house in Galveston, Texas. • Back in Portland, they downsized to a condo in a prewar buildng, tranforming the plain rooms with Asian antiques; an *ikebana* arrangement sits atop an 1850s (late Edo-period) shop chest. • A more recent home is this 1920 transitional bungalow in Portland, which readily took to their Asian antiques.







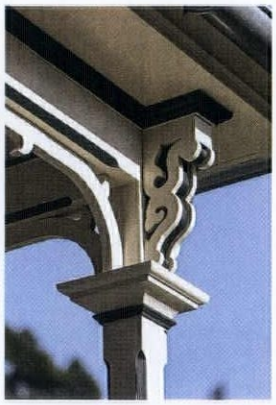


THE MILLERS: A MOST HONORABLE MENTION

"We bought an old house in 1975 because it was all we could afford," wrote Dan Miller, the first to respond to our call for Serial Restorers. He and Pat tell us that the local librarian let them in on a new publication called *The Old-House Journal*. Soon Dan was writing for us, back in the newsletter days. • The Millers have restored at least four of their own homes: a tiny Queen Anne cottage with a gingerbread porch, a three-unit brick Victorian, an Italianate with a carriage house, and another Victorian with Gothic Revival and Italianate elements (shown here). As active members of the Gifford Park Association in Elgin, Illinois, they volunteer on rehabilitating problem properties in town.



LEFT When they bought this house, the ornament was gone and the porch enclosed. **ABOVE** Pat and Dan Miller on the porch.



RIGHT Pat Miller designed the appropriate porch, and Dan built its parts and pieces.

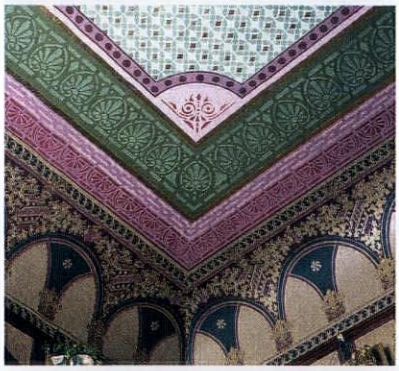
Not one, but two Victorians

In both Oregon and then Texas, the couple's dedication resulted in house restorations that inspired their neighbors, for whom they consulted. "Study old photos," Steve Austin often counseled. And "to be authentic, avoid getting cutesy."



BELOW (from top) Stenciled frieze and ceiling are in a Galveston guest room. Six stenciled patterns on the parlor ceiling in Portland. Mixed stenciling and papers in Galveston.









ABOVE Sophisticated stenciling by the owners is capped with pine picture-rail mouldings painted gold. The library in the Galveston house was inspired by the Mark Twain house, decorated by Tiffany's Associated Artists.



ABOVE In the Portland house, an 8x10 bedroom became a therapy office with hand-blocked Morris-design 'Chrysanthemum' wallpaper. Commissioned leaded glass inspired by hotel windows in London obscure the too-neighborly view. **BELOW** In the Galveston library, the design for hand-stenciled walls was borrowed from the exemplary Aesthetic interior of the Mark Twain house in Hartford, Connecticut.



Intrepid DIYers

Kudos to old-house saints like Mark Reynolds, who take it upon themselves to save one house at a time. "I'm currently working on #4," he wrote. First came a Kansas City Foursquare; in 1982 "my mom sent me a gift subscription to OHJ and I've subscribed ever since." Next was a 1918 Dutch Colonial in Royal Oak, Mich., and then "I bought 'the dead guy's house' in Detroit's Indian Village Historic District. The roof had leaked for 20 years." Mark still owns and works on the 21-room, ca. 1900 house designed by Stratton & Baldwin (Stratton was the husband of Mary Chase Stratton, Pewabic Pottery founder). In 2012, he stumbled on a deal for a 1916 Storybook Cottage, also in Indian Village.



RIGHT Reynolds has been working on the 1916 English Storybook Cottage for six years. **BELOW** Purchased in 1997, the ca. 1900 Victorian with Shingle Style and Queen Anne elements remains a work in progress; exterior restoration was completed years ago.





RIGHT Reynolds and his late brother Chris rehabbed this 1918 house during the 1980s. About this one he notes: "Not all old houses were well built." More recent, ongoing projects have been period restorations.



HOUSE NUMBER 3







Asian Influence
and the Craftsman Style

The attraction that started with the China trade became a fascination with all things Japanese in the Aesthetic Movement era. In their Northwest bungalow, "I didn't want everything to be Stickley," Cathy Hitchcock says. It was her idea to cover the white walls with grasscloth wallpaper, enhancing the ebony-color woodwork and creating flow between rooms in the small footprint. Asian antiques accomplished the rest.

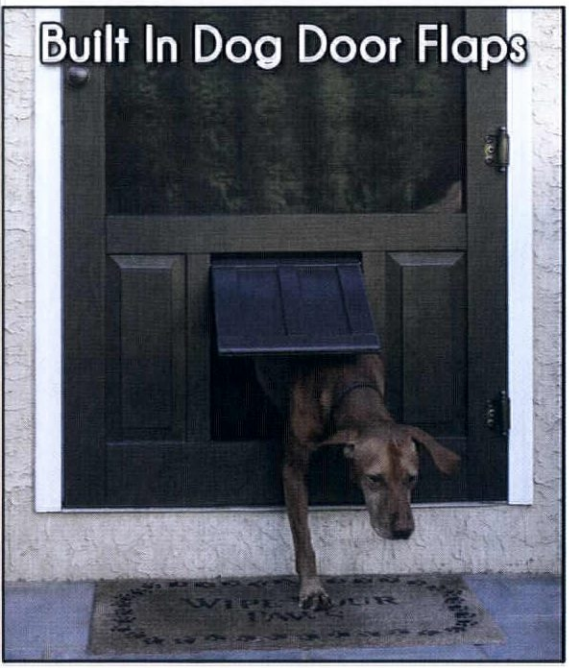
ABOVE Before and After views of the condo bedroom and living room show how the couple transformed a white-box apartment using their color sense and Asian antiques. **BELOW** In the dining room of the 1920 Portland bungalow, a *mizuya* (kitchen *tansu*) sits near the treasured, hand-dyed indigo *kasuri* wall-hanging. Walls are covered in grasscloth. **BELOW LEFT** Stickley furniture is a good backdrop for Asian antiques that include a paper-covered lamp. Coincidentally, the previous owner had "ebonized" the woodwork.



HOUSE NUMBER 4

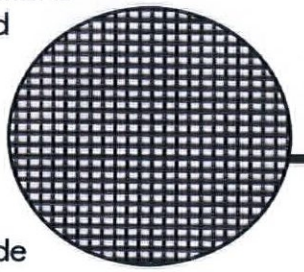


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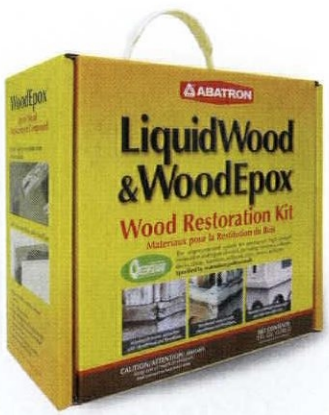


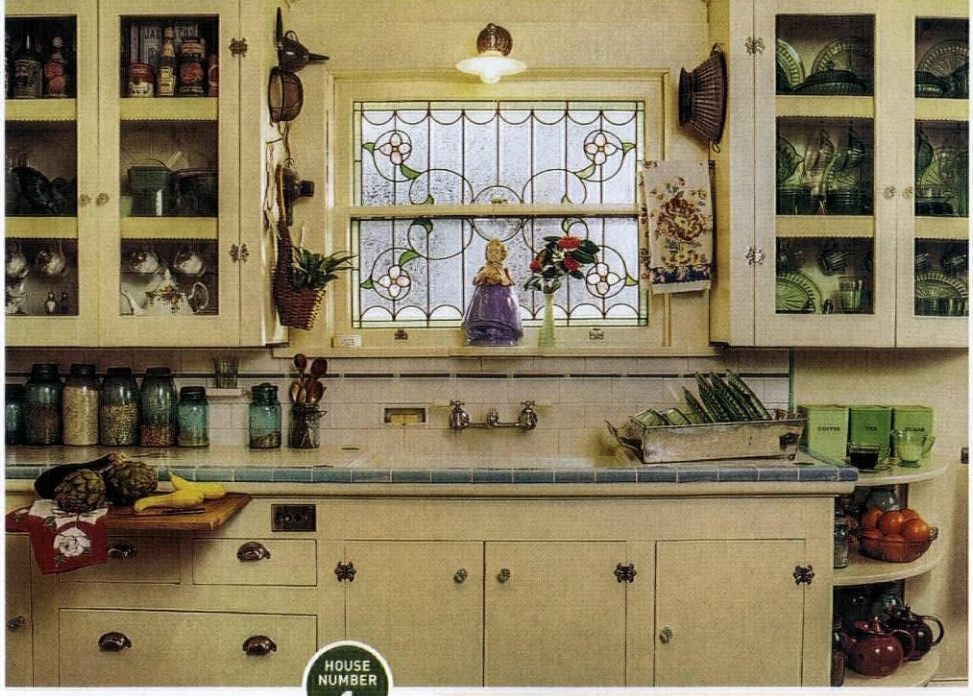
LEFT Marsha Caporaso, president of Abatron, is tireless in her response to restorers' needs. **BELOW** The wood consolidant and wood filler are DIY best sellers.

DIY COMMITMENT

When word went out about OHJ's "Serial Restorers" contest, Abatron president Marsha Caporaso spoke right up: "Is there any product more of your readers have needed and used than wood epoxies?" Indeed! Abatron, Inc., in Kenosha, Wisconsin, was among our very first advertisers when OHJ began to accept paid advertising in 1986. Diligent about meeting DIYer needs, Abatron considers building preservation a major component of the business, unlike many chemical companies that focus on large trade buyers. Abatron maintains regular customer contact through their website and Facebook, answering technical questions.

Founded in 1959, Abatron specializes in the research, development, and custom formulation of epoxy and polyester compounds for repair of wood, concrete, metal, and stone. "I'm proud that our products are safe and easy to use," Caporaso says; it's the first company to have epoxy formulations GreenGuard Certified®. We thank her for sponsoring "Serial Restorers." ***abatron.com***



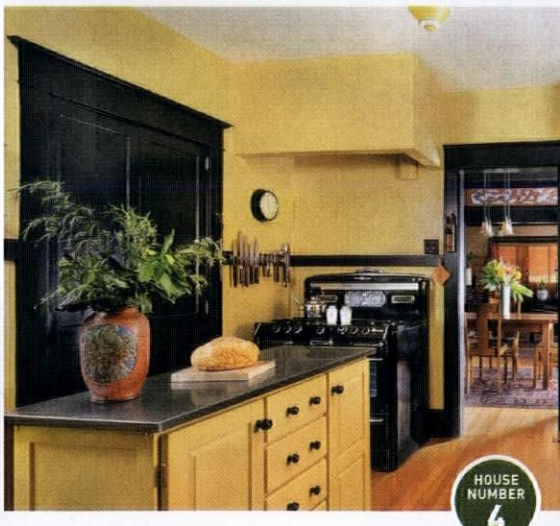


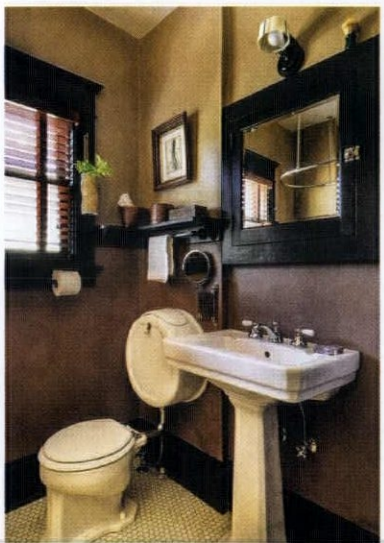
Kitchens & Baths

to go with the house

A sensitive approach is nowhere more visible than in the kitchens, each so appropriate to its house. Rather than take the room back to pre-electric days, the couple restored a 1930s-era kitchen in Portland. The bungalow kitchen is little changed from its original plan.







TOP TO BOTTOM In the Portland Victorian, the kitchen was restored to its 1930s look. • A tight budget and growing preference for authenticity resulted in a true Victorian kitchen in Galveston. • "Ebonized" wood in the bungalow kitchen goes with the vintage O'Keefe & Merritt stove. The bath, too, is vintage.

 FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 119.

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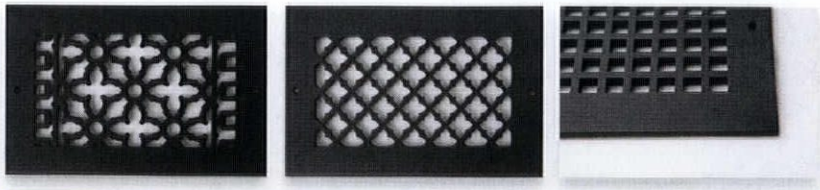
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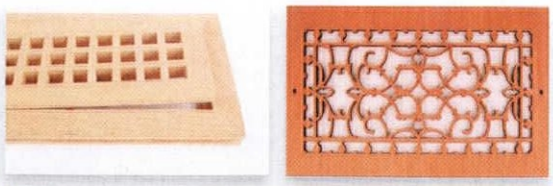
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DESIGN



The stylized ginkgo-leaf motif in new art-glass windows was inspired by a set of china designed in 1913. The high wainscot is nicely proportioned.

SEAMLESS MAKEOVER REVEAL

An architect/owner shows how a bland spec house becomes an Arts & Crafts example that befits the neighborhood.

PAGE 32

32 **A CRAFTSMAN IMAGINED:** BETTER PROPORTIONS, BETTER TRIM
Exploring design considerations, period motifs, and appropriate materials for a successful Arts & Crafts makeover.

+

42 VINTAGE VISION
44 KITCHENS + BATHS
46 THEY STILL MAKE

A CRAFTSMAN *imagined*



Better lines, better proportions, better trim—and an Arts & Crafts house rises in the neighborhood. The architect-homeowner explains design considerations for seamless makeovers.

Problem: You can't find the right old house in the right neighborhood, nor do you want to build on undeveloped land. Opportunity: Thousands of undistinguished 20th-century houses await upgrades. Increasingly, bland houses "with good bones"—and located in established neighborhoods—are being redesigned. Because the makeover shown on these pages was done by an architect for his own family, it offers lessons to others who are thinking about a redesign. **BY PATRICIA POORE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRIDLEY + GRAVES**



Built in 1980, the structurally sound spec house had a cedar-clad chimney and a wide-eyed stare. Now, well-proportioned Craftsman details have made it a neighborhood favorite.

HEARTH ART

In a period bungalow, small windows ordinarily would flank the fireplace over built-ins, but this fireplace backs up to a bedroom. Side niches are lit with dimmable LED strip lighting hidden in a baffle.

Style makeovers are not always successful; you might remember the proliferation of plastic "gingerbread" during the 1990s Victorian-ization of everything from farmhouses to mid-century ranches. More recently has come a fad for adding squat bungalow piers to random façades, calling it "Craftsman." Nevertheless, Arts & Crafts elements are easily identified and adaptable. Plain and boxlike houses built from the 1950s through the 1980s generally take well to the addition of a substantial porch outside, and a colonnade to organize the already-open plan inside.

The "clients" here are Dale and Stephanye Peek of the Peek Design Group. They'd purchased this 1980 spec house when it was new and raised their family here. "We were committed to our Marietta (Georgia) neighborhood," Stephanye says.

"But the house really needed a fresh look," Dale adds. "Our firm has been designing Arts & Crafts-inspired houses since 2000 for infill lots in Craftsman neighborhoods, and we fell in love with the simplicity and detailing of the style."

As the neighborhood matured, residents explored upgrades. Some have maintained the existing cedar-siding appearance, but other houses have changed more dramatically. The Peeks chose a contemporary interpretation of early 20th-century Craftsman



LEFT The old fireplace (above) was a prefab unit with bifold glass doors: "very 1980s," Dale Peek says. "We searched high and low and finally found a wood-burning unit that, once we broke it in with a few fires, looks very much like a masonry fireplace." **TOP** After a review of many period fireplaces, the owners selected Terra Firma tiles in a carefully chosen ensemble of period colors. Peek Design Group's Lauren Finley put together the final pattern.

Art-glass windows are a focal point in the view through the colonnade. The original wall ended without a proper doorway, and made rooms feel small.



THE PROGRAM

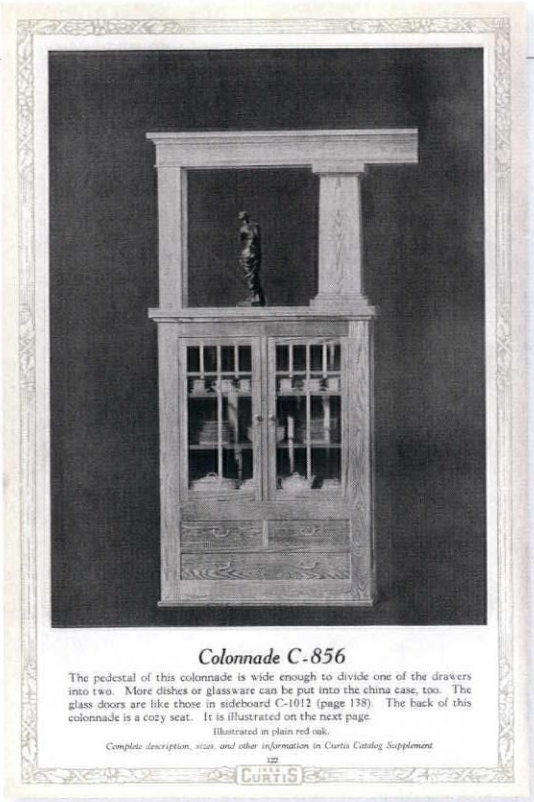
Renovation would preserve the structure while incorporating traditional Craftsman design. "Our main goal was to make it look like we had restored a 100-year-old house," says Dale Peek. Upgrading the kitchen and master suite, and adding motifs with personal meaning, were also on the agenda.

- **Using period-inspired materials**, detailing, and selections in order to create the illusion of a restoration.
- Replacing the skimpy front porch with one that incorporates **bungalow-era details**.
- **Integrating stained glass** as a design element for the house.
- **Relocating the laundry** from the basement to the addition.
- **Adding a home office** area on the main floor.
- **Redesigning the kitchen** to flow better with the dining and family rooms, and adding pantry space nearby.
- **Creating a workshop** and garden room near but apart from the garage.
- **Improving the master suite** with a larger bathroom and closet.
- Creating a new **main level powder room**.
- **Replacing the out-of-code stairway** with one that made a statement and helped express the A&C period.
- **Upgrading** the roofing, doors, windows, and siding, correcting any failures as well as moving toward period design.
- **Redesigning the driveway** to allow for parking near the front door, in addition to the drive-under garage.
- Creating a **new landscaping plan** including a koi pond.

the colonnade

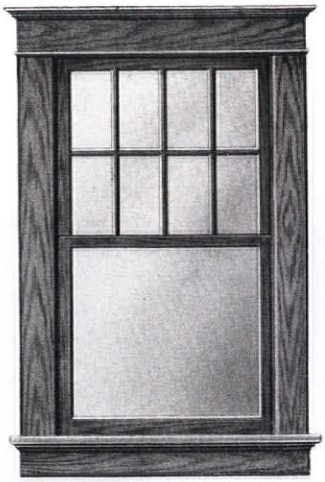
Incorporating china cabinets, the new, period-style colonnade separates the entry and family room (at left in the photo) from the dining room. "I'm not a big proponent of the current 'open floor plan' mentality, a fad that's so prevalent today," says Dale Peek. "A colonnade keeps this rather small space open, while separating the two rooms, both of which feel larger than they did." The colonnade is the perfect bungalow-era aesthetic element, a centerpiece of the redesign.

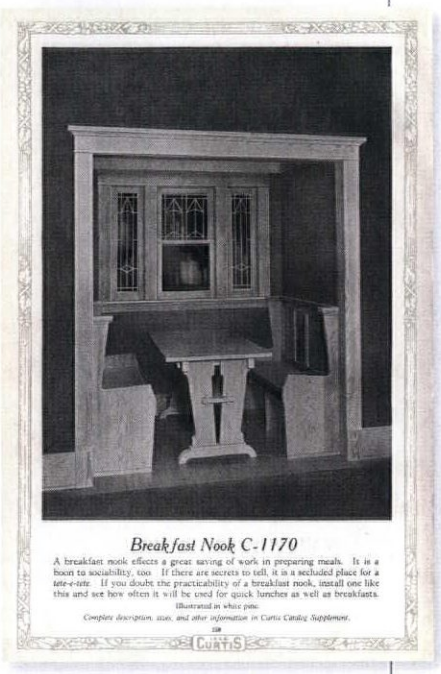




LEFT One of 22 stock colonnades shown in the 1917 Curtis woodwork catalog. **RIGHT** "Stock interior finish" window trim from the Adams-Rogers Company millwork catalog, ca. 1920s. **BELOW** The 'Whitney' staircase, Adams-Rogers Co. **BOTTOM RIGHT** A nook from the Curtis catalog; stylized leaded glass in the windows.







Adaptable **to the Revival**

Elements of the Arts & Crafts era are easy to identify and adaptable (as examples, they do not require high ceilings; woodwork may be painted or done in clear-finish hardwood). The simple forms and unostentatious detailing make it a popular style. Furthermore, documentation is readily available in old millworks catalogs, many of them online. Such rectilinear elements as square columns and butted trim are relatively easy and inexpensive to duplicate. All this makes Craftsman a favorite vocabulary for new construction and for home makeovers.

In a wide variety of expressions, several key elements of the era have made a comeback in the past 20 years. Chief among them are room-dividing colonnades, breakfast nooks, panel or skeleton wainscots, staircases with square spindles, painted kitchens, and fireplaces with art-tile surrounds.

style: "Structurally, this house was similar to those houses," Dale explains. "It made sense to renovate in that mode . . . also, a vernacular Craftsman style is well represented in Marietta." Peek Design Group's Lauren Finley created a watercolor rendering to serve as inspiration during the renovation.

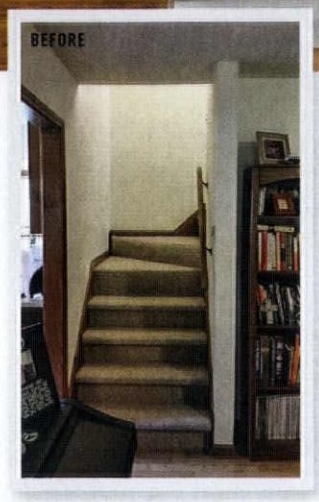
"Regardless of age or style, I would never advocate buying a good example—architect-designed or stylish and well-appointed—only to gut or otherwise remake it," says the architect. "I'm of the opinion that a nicely designed mid-century ranch, for example, should be preserved; our respect for period homes shouldn't end with Arts & Crafts Bungalows. This house, though, which had very little style and almost no detail—well, the word I'm looking for is 'boring'. Why not give it some love?"

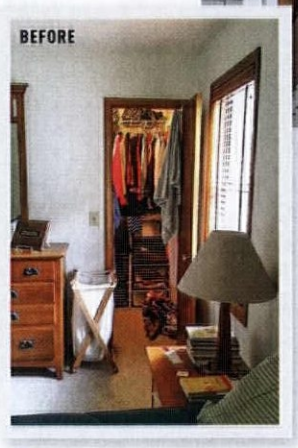
From the start, the Peeks knew they wanted to add a koi pond in the backyard. Landscape architect Kristian Wiles had urged them to name the house: they chose The Pond House, alluding to the pond and the name of a favorite restaurant near Stephanye's hometown. Then "we looked for opportunities to express the name in the details," Dale says. "Thus we have a cattail-inspired porch balustrade design, cattail cutouts in the outside window casings [all built by Peek Design Group design technician David Lawrence], and the same motif in the art-glass window above the front door." Real cattails were planted in the new water feature.

Another motif was inspired by two huge red oaks in the backyard. "During research into the American Arts & Crafts period," Dale says, "we found that a 'tree of life' motif was popular, and is again today. Rookwood has tile in this design, which we used for insets in the brick piers. Also, we found a similar tile design from Terra Firma, called 'Oak Tree 1', for the new fireplace."

Art glass in the dining room is a contemporary interpretation











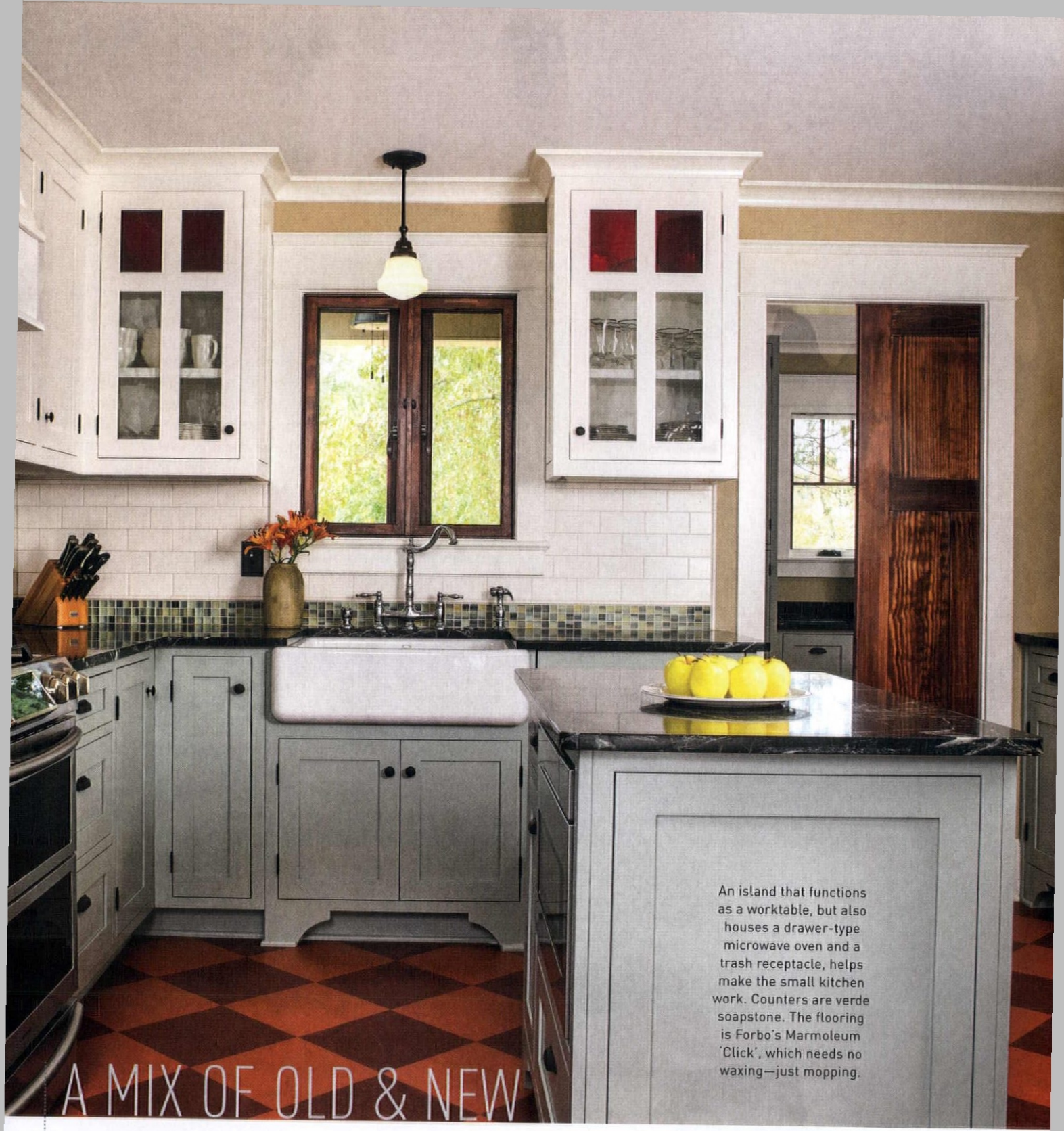
ABOVE A study of vintage bathrooms led to the design of the basketweave marble-tile floor in white with black accents—reversed in the shower. Pedestal sinks, common by 1920, flank a custom cabinet. The expanded bath is through the door that used to lead to a closet. **TOP LEFT** Moving the non-code-compliant stair created better circulation in the house.

of the ginkgo motif in reissued 1913 china the couple bought at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. (It has been discontinued.) The red glass picks up on the china and exterior sash color. The green goes with interior colors and the pottery. The panels are inserts installed inside standard fixed-sash windows from JELD-WEN. Thus art glass is protected from the weather, and the windows meet today's energy standards. They're trimmed out in the bungalow-era manner of others in the house.

Details aside, the house lives better now after a reconfiguration of space and a rear addition that added 445 square feet on the first floor. It accommodates a new pantry/laundry/office suite, a stair hall, and space behind the master bedroom, which has always been downstairs. The old closet was only about 5' x 5' and the bath was minimal. Adding on allowed for a bigger master bath. "Now this area is an asset instead of a detriment," Peek says. "Visitors love the master bath, and so will future buyers."

New step-backs make the rear elevation more architecturally interesting than the flat plane that was there before. Upstairs, the addition provided 262 square feet, enough for the stair hall/media





An island that functions as a worktable, but also houses a drawer-type microwave oven and a trash receptacle, helps make the small kitchen work. Counters are verde soapstone. The flooring is Forbo's Marmoleum 'Click', which needs no waxing—just mopping.

A MIX OF OLD & NEW

Inset cabinet doors and exposed hinges were a given, despite the added expense. Period details mask the modern layout. Muntins in **glass-front doors** form the cross pattern so common in period detailing. **Painted cabinets** are appropriate for a modest house of the period, and they are also easier on a budget. The cabinetmaker suggested the "feet" as a nod to kitchen furniture. The colorful **checkerboard linoleum** floor "is a bit bold for our conservative taste," says the owner-architect, "but we love how it turned out. It brings so much interest to the space."





LEFT Cutouts in the balustrade allude to the repeating cattail motif. Two huge red oaks in the backyard inspired the Rookwood "tree of life" tiles inserted in the brick piers. **BOTTOM** The Peek Design Group office has a library of books on color palettes in different periods. The Peeks came up with a color scheme both authentic and pleasing to them.

room and a private bath for one of three bedrooms.

The original staircase was right in front of the entry. It was a "winder" stair; the steps themselves did not meet today's code, nor did the headroom. Since the stair had to be reworked, Peek opted to change its location. The new staircase space became part of the better circulation in the house, creating improved flow and easier access to the second floor and the basement.

The final cost, as is so often the case, was more than budgeted. "That's due to our fervent desire to make things as authentic as possible," Dale Peek says. The least expensive way to design and build exterior elements is to specify items that are easily obtainable or "off-the-shelf." Even though Craftsman detailing is simpler than Federal carving or Victorian gingerbread, elements of the right quality and proportion are not readily found, so many must be custom-made, meaning greater cost.

"We're always thinking 'standard dimensions' when we design," Peek says, "but in this case dimensions had to accommodate existing conditions and function. For example, we designed the stairs with a slightly less than maximum riser height so they are easier to climb.

"Thanks to the Arts & Crafts Revival, however," he adds, "we could find many good reproductions that weren't around 20-odd years ago: interior trim, light fixtures, and furniture."

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 119.

All in the details

The 1980 house was typical for Georgia, a stained-cedar "starter" house built on spec in a subdivision of so-called "cedar contemporaries." This was one of two houses built in a more traditional style. Although the structure was good, detailing was minimal.

The new design exposes the roof framing at the front porch; a new center gable accents the entry door. Brick piers and steps were chosen because they are common on early-20th-century Georgia houses. Tapered columns have proportions similar to forms in the region, made a little beefier for emphasis.

Except for a small cantilever above the drive-under garage, the addition is at the back. Roof lines as seen from the front didn't change. Cheap, aluminum, single-hung windows were upgraded.





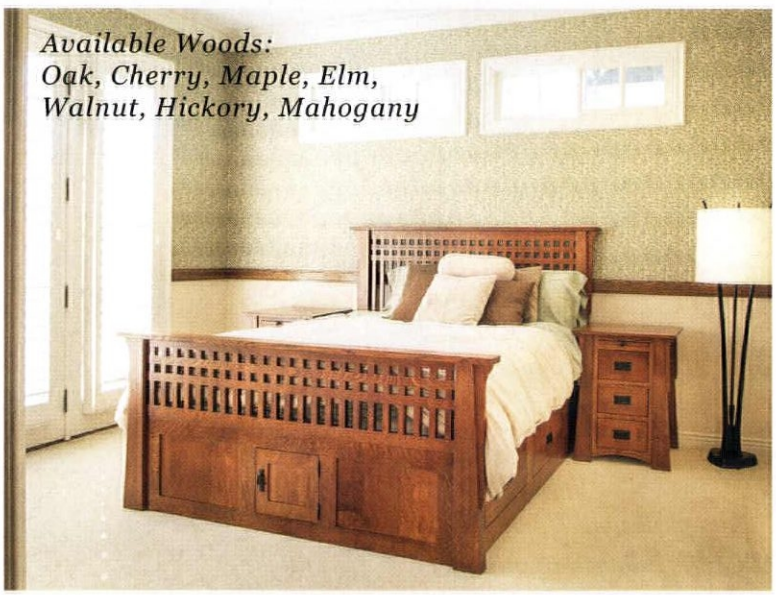
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Laundry, ca. 1947

From "Livable Basement Rooms" by the flooring company Armstrong



A spirited collision of then-modern technology with nursery-rhyme innocence, this room has stowaway clotheslines and an electrical cord rack on the ceiling, plus provisions for sorting clothes, pressing water from washed linens, ironing, and sewing. Whew.

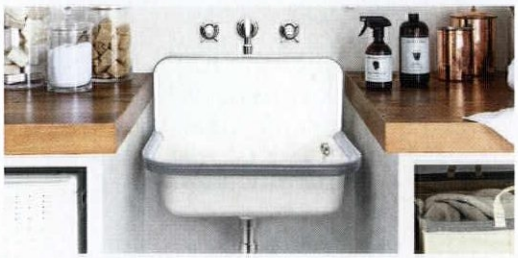


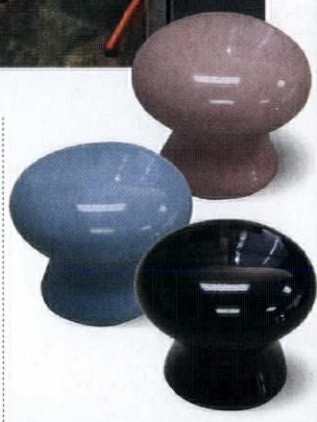
Laundry

Wall Words are easy-to-use decals to be applied to flat surfaces. Most designs are decorative text, a popular Arts & Crafts motif. Hundreds of offerings; online "design it yourself" feature and custom work. Fun for laundry, kitchen, or nursery! "Rabbits on the Grass," $39, and "Laundry" script, $29. *wallwords.com*

Armstrong was touting their asphalt tile flooring, practical for a laundry room. Three marbled colors create a plaid design. Curtains echo the cabinet knobs.

The German-made Alape Bucket Sink from Rejuvenation is glazed steel with a grey PVC edge (no tap hole; offset overflow hole). You can add a wall-mounted faucet above; professional installation needed. Measures 20 1/8" wide, $249. *rejuvenation.com*





Available in unusual, postwar dusty blue and pink, plus black and white, these 1.3" Allen + Roth Round Cabinet Knobs are porcelain on zinc with a glossy finish. Priced at $ .97–2.37 each at Lowe's. *lowes.com*

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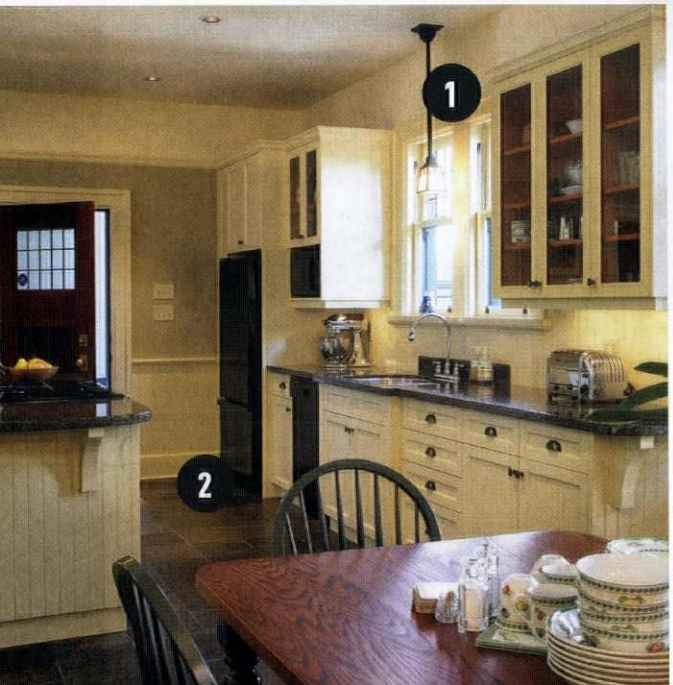
All the Right Notes

Remaking the kitchen in a 1912 English Arts & Crafts house. **By Patricia Poore**

After restoring a 1903 house in Victoria, British Columbia, these owners were settled in—until they went on a historic-homes tour and fell for a 1912 house by famed local architect Samuel Maclure. Although there had been only three owners, the house had seen many changes, even becoming a two-family duplex in 1947.

The couple decided to rescue it, and would do most of the work themselves. They put their belongings in storage and camped out in the dining room for months as they set about their rescue mission, fortunate to be armed with the architect's original plans.

The original kitchen had been three small rooms—larder, pantry, and cooking room—with a wood stove, a chimney, and a water tank. But the space had become one large room in a remodeling done just before they bought the house. So they had a pantry cabinet made in old-growth fir, which faithfully reproduces a damaged built-in from the old pantry. Cabinets in the working end of the room were built to match. The room was refitted with a period wainscot.





A new bank of cabinets in the kitchen was faithfully reproduced from a damaged built-in that remained in the house's original pantry.

1. NOD TO ARTS & CRAFTS
A period reproduction pendant light over the sink, large brackets under countertop overhangs, and the back door are notes in keeping with the Arts & Crafts design of other rooms.

2. NATURAL MATERIALS
Stone flooring certainly fits modern sensibilities yet suggests the back halls of earlier houses. The use of dark wood and natural stone balances the white cabinets.



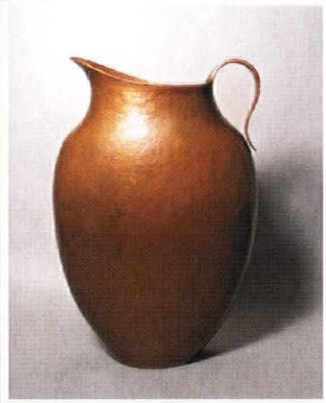
3. PLAIN WHITE CABINETS
Made of fir but painted creamy white, plain cabinets are a bungalow-era default for kitchens. Note the graceful arch of the apron, behind which is hidden task lighting.

4. PERIOD HARDWARE
The cup-handle bin pulls and traditional butler's pantry latches are true to period. The antiqued finish on these and the light fixture mix well with the nickel-finish faucet.

BE INSPIRED...



A versatile Arts & Crafts design, the 'Evergreen' 7"-wide, **stem-hung pendant** is shown with the Arch overlay in Verdigris Patina; 12 finishes offered. Choose from 13 glass options (clear, seedy, iridescent, mica, etc.) and four other overlay patterns. Priced starting at $326. ***arroyocraftsman.com***



Copperware stands out behind glass pantry doors in the Arts & Crafts kitchen. Current offerings from Cobre, all artisan-made, include the hand-hammered **Master Series Copper Pitcher** with an oval footprint to fit on a narrow shelf or mantel, 17" tall, $425. ***ecobre.com***



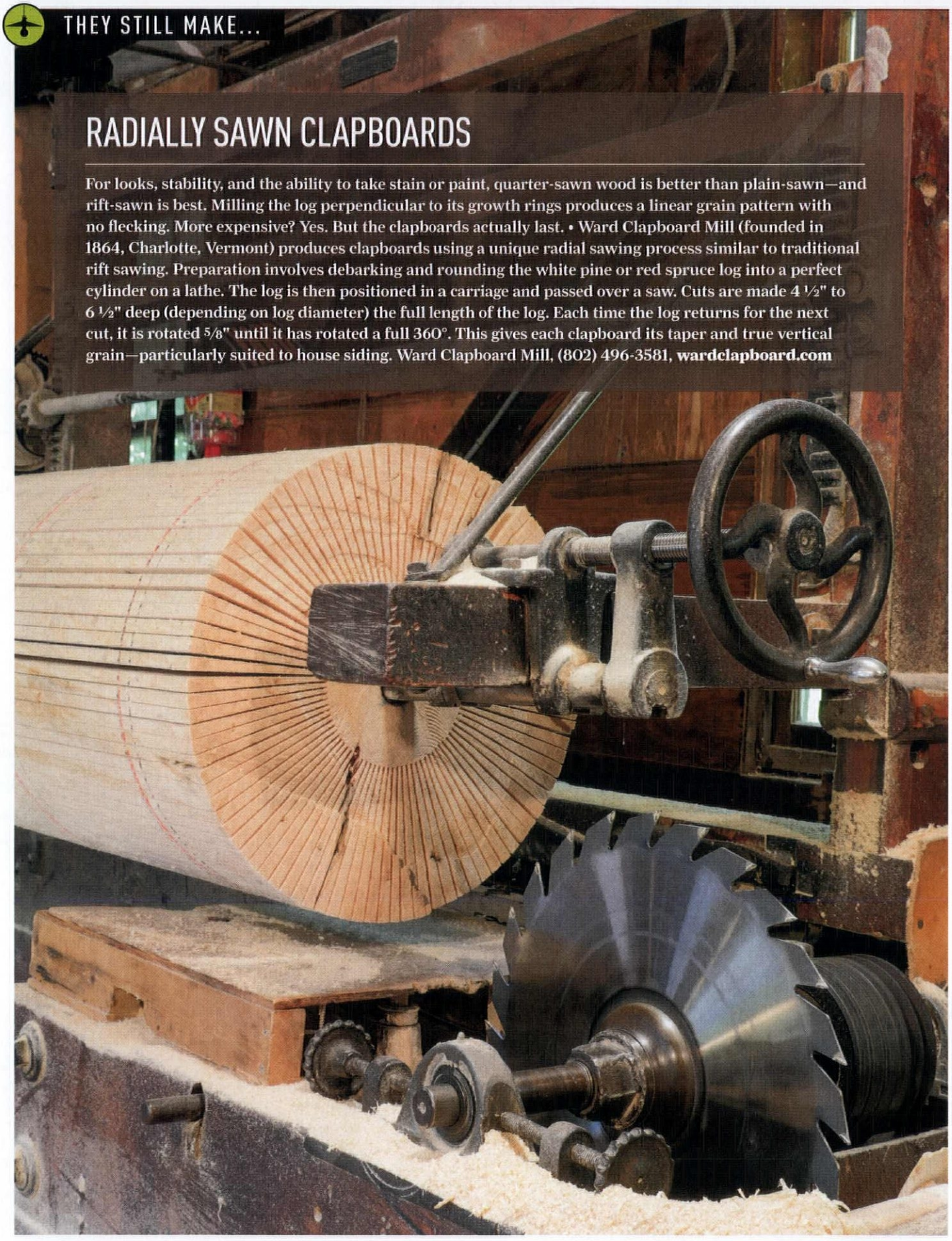
With a sturdy mechanism, the authentic **Butler Pantry Latch** made by Horton Brasses comes in seven finishes including the Antique finish shown. Sizes small (1 9/16" w, starting at $28.50) and a larger version (2 1/8" w, starting at $49.97). Slotted screws provided. ***horton-brasses.com***



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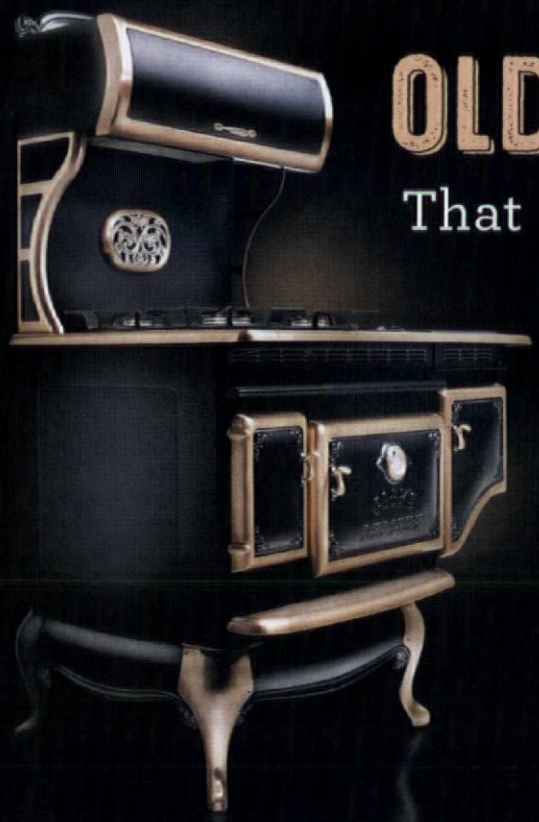
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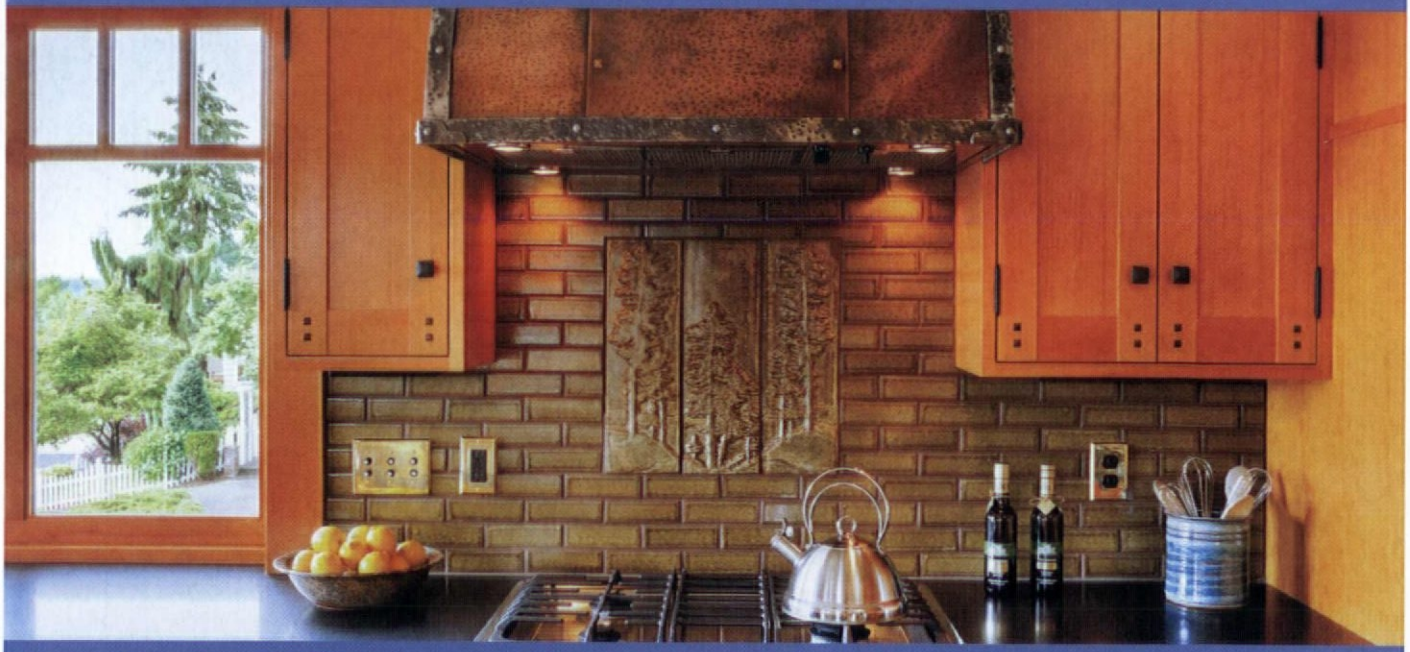
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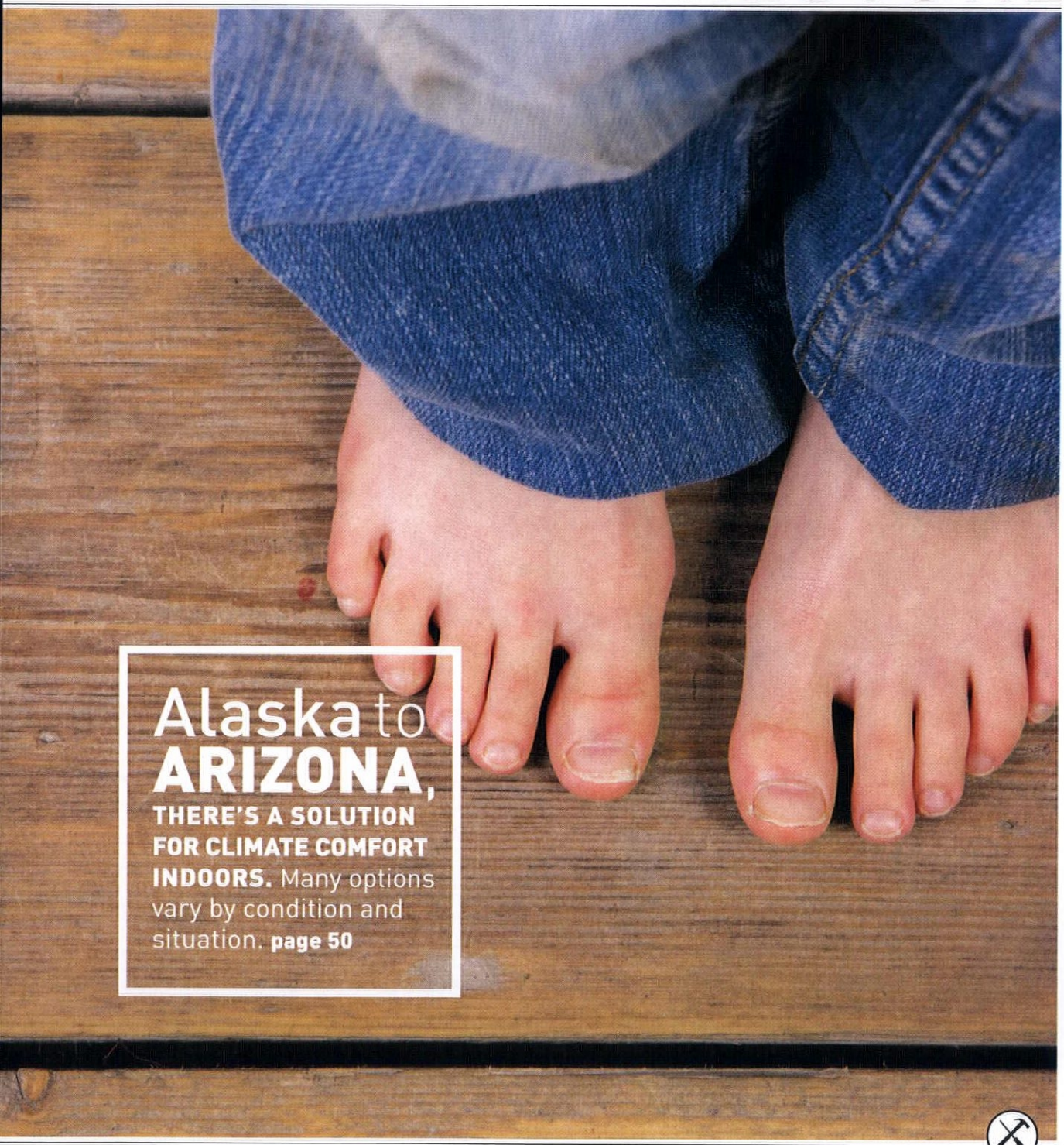
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THERE'S A SOLUTION FOR CLIMATE COMFORT INDOORS. Many options vary by condition and situation. **page 50**

60 **KNOW-HOW:** GEOTHERMAL SYSTEMS UPDATE
Energy from the ground: it's catching on with old-house owners on smaller lots.

+

58 TOOLS + MATERIALS
64 QUICK MAKEOVERS
68 SALVAGE IT
70 DO THIS, NOT THAT
72 STUFF A PLUMBER SCREWED UP
74 ASK OHJ



There's more than one way to create whole-house comfort, even in older homes without ductwork. The small vents from SpacePak's mini-duct system, which deliver warm or cool air, all but vanish into the ceiling.

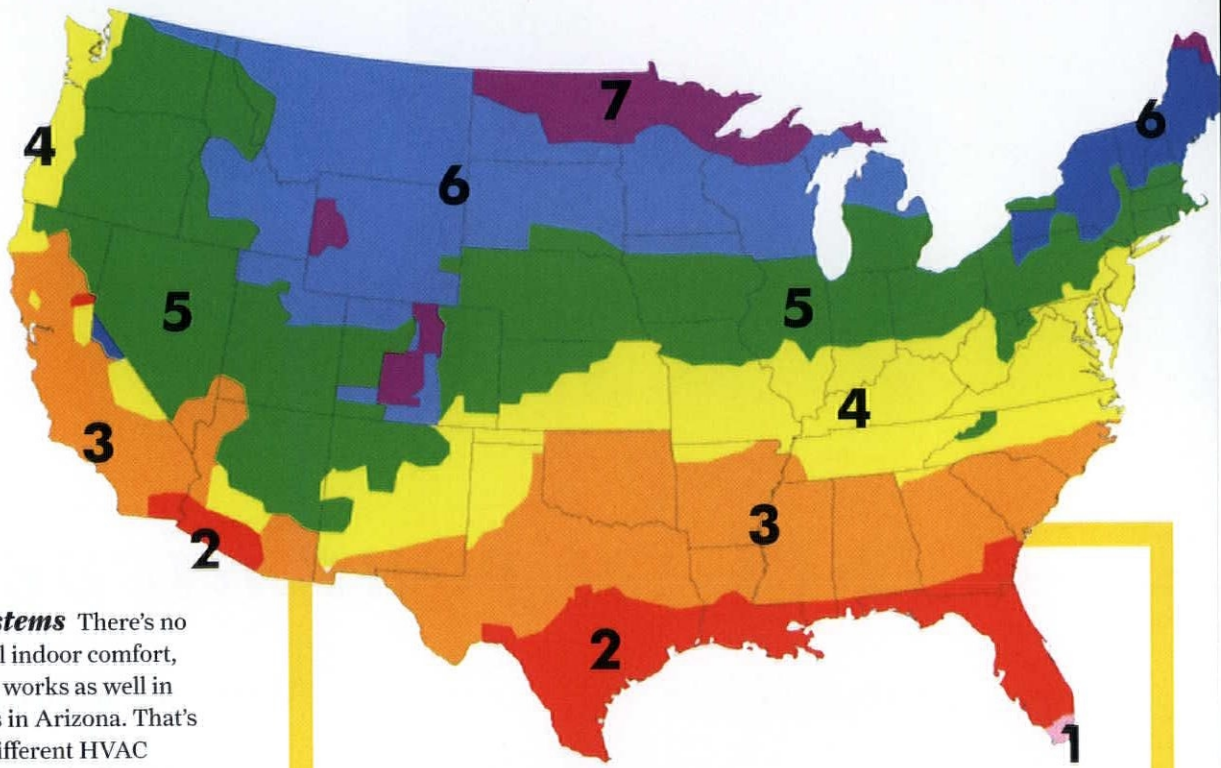
climate COMFORT



fueling your niche

Whether indoors or out, we humans like to live in temperate situations. Weather and seasons, of course, vary in the extreme: from arctic cold to Louisiana hot, from dry as a desert to wet as a steaming bog. Sunlight in some locales is a significant factor in cooling; in other places, abundant cloud cover creates different conditioning needs and makes certain technologies less relevant.

BY MARY ELLEN POLSON



RIGHT Recommended insulation levels are identified by zone for the entire country; the higher the number, the greater the amount of insulation needed to achieve desired R-value.

Whole House Systems There's no one solution to overall indoor comfort, certainly not one that works as well in Connecticut as it does in Arizona. That's the key reason why different HVAC technologies are more popular in some areas and nonexistent in others. For instance, steam and hot-water radiant heating emerged well over a century ago in the cold Northeast, while forced-air heat pumps have been the standard in the South and West, for decades, given their ability to supply and circulate both warm and cold air.

The difficulty of balancing the need for heating and cooling during weather extremes has led many homeowners to install overlapping systems: a fireplace insert to boost an older furnace, say, or window air conditioners in a house with steam radiators. This has resulted in the expansion of HVAC-related industries in everything from spot radiant heating to solar panels.

While any of these options can have a place in a well-thought-out approach to increasing the comfort of your home, it's best to evaluate the needs of the house as a unit first. Even if you think your existing HVAC system is working well, it may pay off in the long run to have it evaluated for efficiency. If an addition or major renovation is in the planning stages, now is the time to consider an upgrade to newer, more efficient heat/cool sources, or even conversion to a completely new system, such as geothermal.

Whole-house systems generally con-

INSULATION *& Radiant Barriers*

No matter where you live, a well-insulated house will be more comfortable, whether the outside temperature is 9° F or 90° F.

Insulation helps balance the need for additional heating or cooling during weather extremes. **The higher the R-value of the insulation, the greater its effectiveness.** The Department of Energy publishes a guide to recommended insulation levels by location based on R-values, available online at energystar.gov.

Installing more insulation in your home usually increases the R-value and the resistance to heat flow. With retrofits, however, **this value can be affected by temperature, aging, moisture accumulation, and the settled density of the insulation,** so it's important to take those factors into consideration when installing additional material.

If the house is in a particularly hot climate—Zones 1, 2, or 3, for instance—installing a radiant barrier is key to improving overall comfort, no matter how much insulation is in place. Although radiant barriers have no R value, these highly reflective materials re-emit radiant heat rather than absorbing it, reducing cooling loads.

Sizing a BOILER

A boiler that's too small won't be able to produce sufficient heat to warm the house, and one that's too large will waste energy. ***A boiler's output is measured in BTUs*** *(British Thermal Units). To calculate the correct size, use these guidelines:*

- **COLD CLIMATES:** 50 BTUs per square foot
- **MODERATE CLIMATES:** 35 BTUs per square foot
- **WARM OR HOT CLIMATES:** 20 BTUs per square foot

If choosing between boilers that are slightly larger or smaller than the suggested BTUs for the square footage of your house, ***always go with the larger option.*** *Otherwise, you'll be looking at supplementary heating methods.*



LEFT In a mini-split system like this one from Rheem, the heat pump (at back) is installed outdoors, powering one or more of the indoor units (at front).

Heat Pumps & Mini-Splits

Another common whole-house system for moderate and warm climates is the air-source electric heat pump. Primarily driven by the need for air conditioning, a heat pump uses a refrigerant to cool the house during warm weather. When it's cold out, the pump can reverse the cycle to heat the house. Surprisingly, heat pumps can be more energy-efficient than other types of electric heat, including gas furnaces.

A more recent type of heat pump, called a ductless or "mini-split," is an ideal retrofit option for homes with no existing duct system. Multiple wall-mounted indoor units can be installed in individual rooms, all connected to a single outdoor unit. Like any heat pump, this type can provide both heating and air conditioning, but without the expense and destruction of installing a duct system. Many if not all ductless systems are Energy Star certified and can cut heating and cooling costs by up to 30 percent.

Geothermal systems (see Know-How, p. 60) powered by heat pumps are even more efficient, because they absorb heat from either the ground or from water pumped from below ground.

THE PRO TIP

Heat pumps are rated by heat seasonal performance factor or HSPF. *The higher the HSPF, the lower the annual heating energy cost. The minimum HSPF rating for air-sourced heat pumps is 8.2. High-efficiency models are rated at or above 9 HSPF.*

RIGHT Already inconspicuous, mini-duct vents can be dressed up with trimwork that accents or conceals their presence, as shown by these designer vents from Hi-Velocity.





Even the air handlers can fit into tight spaces, as shown by a Unico System air handler slotted in under the basement floor joists.

INVISIBLE COOL

When an HVAC update is mandatory but it's essential not to disturb the walls or the plaster, there is a whole-house option: mini-duct systems, offered by companies such as Unico, Space Pak, and Hi-Velocity. These cleverly conceived HVAC delivery systems consist of flexible, mini-duct tubing small enough to be routed between studs in walls and in cavities under floors and above ceilings, powered by an air handler. Tubes a mere 2" wide send high-velocity air throughout the house by aspiration, producing relatively even heat or cooling from floor to ceiling. The system creates a gentle circulation pattern and, unlike some forced-air systems, is very quiet. Mini-splits are also an excellent way to add air conditioning to a house with a functional heating system but without the large ducts required by traditional air conditioning.

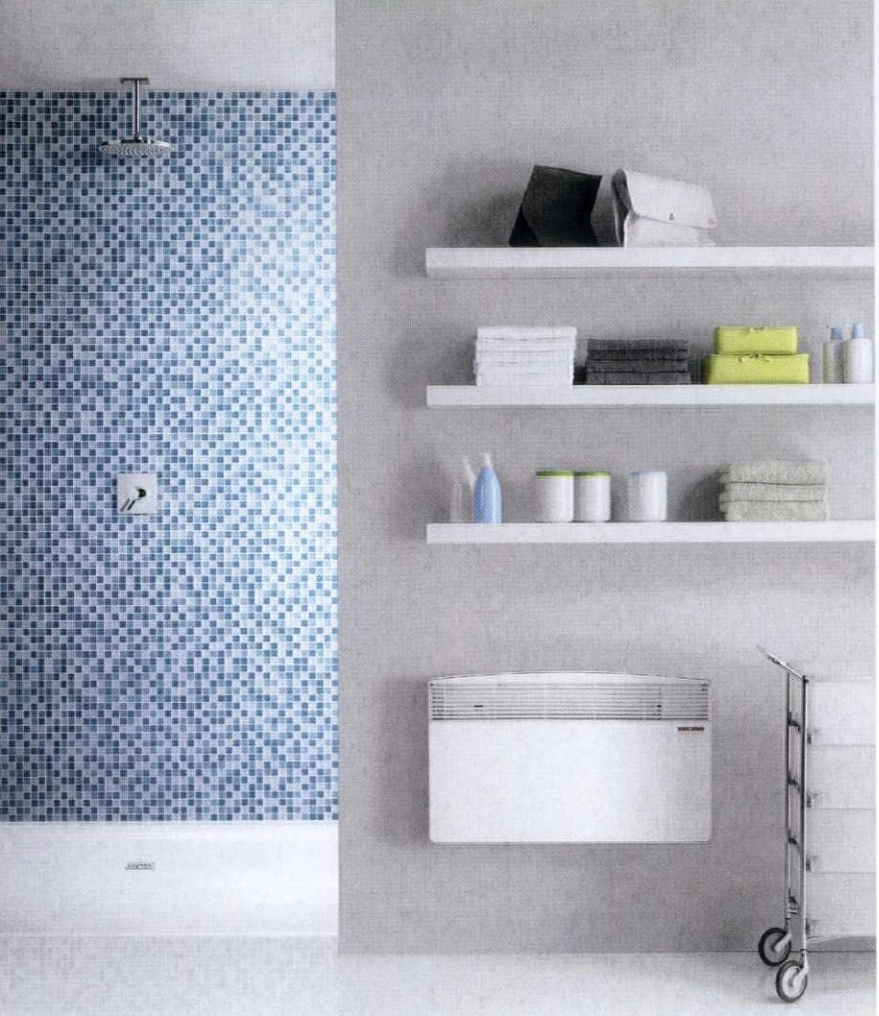
Determine what's readily available in your area, if you are considering changing fuels as part of an energy upgrade. Then get estimates from a qualified heating-and-cooling contractor and local utilities, regarding what you can expect for operating costs now and long-term.

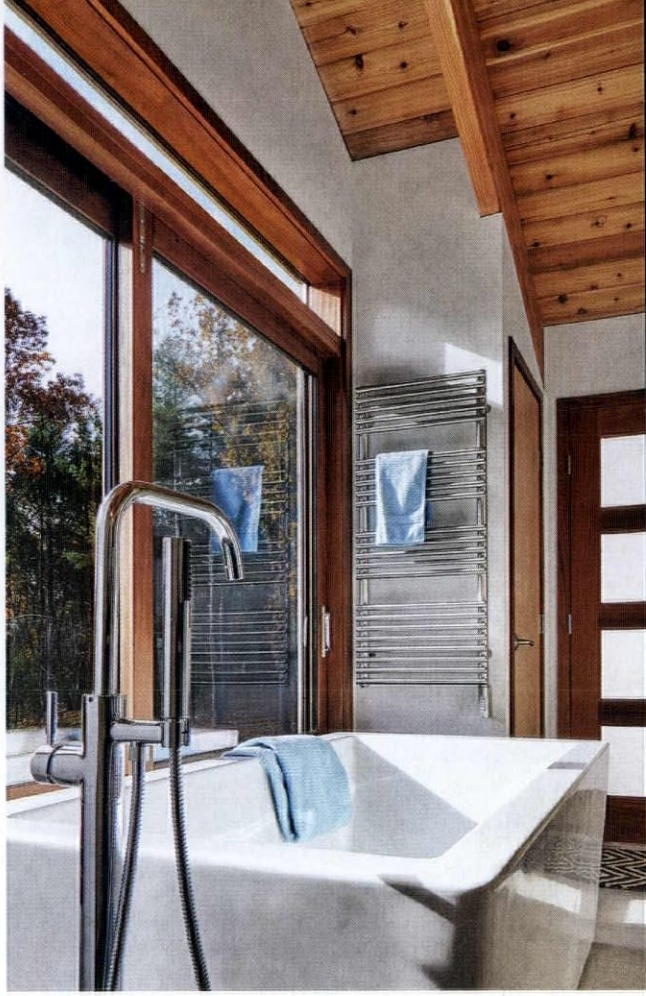
sist of a boiler or furnace and the pipes or ductwork needed to deliver the heated and/or cooled air to different rooms in the living space. No matter what kind of system you have or what fuel you use, it's imperative that the boiler or furnace be maintained in peak condition and properly sized for the house. Have it professionally checked once a year by your power supplier or an HVAC contractor. (The Department of Energy has a maintenance checklist, too long to repeat here, at energy.gov/energysaver/home-heating-systems/furnaces-and-boilers.) If the existing boiler or furnace is over 20 years old, it's usually worth the cost of replacement to lock in future savings on heating and cooling bills.

Efficiency is another key consideration. Modern boilers and furnaces display an Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) rating. New residential boilers must have an AFUE rating of at least 80 percent (85 percent to be EnergyStar rated). By comparison, many old boilers have AFUEs between 50 and 70 percent, making them much less efficient than newer models. The higher the AFUE, the more efficient the boiler. To further boost the efficiency of the boiler, look for a unit with a modulating aquastat. Aquastats are controllers that adjust the boiler water temperature based on outdoor temperatures, reducing operating costs and improving indoor comfort.

An emerging idea in boiler technology that should adapt well to the tighter spaces in older homes are condensing combination (or "combi") boilers. In a technology similar in concept to tankless water heaters, these high-efficiency boilers heat water on demand and also separate the lower-temperature water for residential use from the super-heated water used for space heating (through a hot-water base-


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A Little Boost Some of the best innovations in heating and cooling come in small packages, and offer other benefits: Towel radiators double as towel racks and warmers. Fireplace inserts create cold-weather ambiance as well as abundant heat. Storm windows block sound as well as heat loss. • Other options replace units that have become obsolete, worn out or broken, or are simply missing. Stiebel Eltron's electric convection wall heater is an energy-efficient replacement for old electric baseboard heaters; Runtal North America's style-sympathetic Steamview radiators can fill in the gaps in a one- or two-pipe steam heating system.

LEFT The Stiebel Eltron CNS-E electric convection heater can replace obsolete electric baseboard heaters. Available in sizes from 500 to 2400 watts, the heater has a built-in thermostat, and is fanless and totally silent. **RIGHT** Towel warmers, like this wall unit from Runtal North America, can put out such a significant amount of heat that they also work as room radiators.

board system, for example). Although the technology is proven in institutional and commercial settings, the industry has experienced maintenance issues with units intended for the residential market. As part of the next generation of combi units, Lochinvar just introduced the NOBLE Fire Tube Combi. The NOBLE places critical components like the built-in circulator in an easily accessible location within the unit to simplify maintenance.

As with boilers, furnaces are rated for efficiency with an AFUE. *Minimum efficiency* furnaces generally have an AFUE rating of about 80 percent. Fine for milder climates, the best offer electronic ignition instead of standing pilots, better heat exchangers, and internal vent dampers that reduce the loss of heated or cooled air when the unit isn't cycling. *Mid-efficiency* furnaces (83 to 87 AFUE) offer more precise control of combustion and venting. If you are burning oil, look for a furnace that has a high-static burner; it will extract more heat from the fuel. *High-efficiency* furnaces—recommended for large houses or homes in areas with extreme heating or cooling demands—have AFUEs in the 90 to 96 percent range. High-efficiency furnaces incorporate a second heat exchanger to reclaim some of the heat lost through vaporization.

For boilers and furnaces, specify a sealed combustion unit, which brings outside air directly into the burner and exhausts combustion gases directly to the outside, eliminating the need for a draft hood or damper. Also, take electricity use into consideration. Boilers use electricity to power circulating pumps; furnaces use it to run the fan motor. For a boiler, look for a unit with high-efficiency pump. Similarly, for furnaces, variable-speed or multi-speed fan motors are usually more efficient than single-speed motors.

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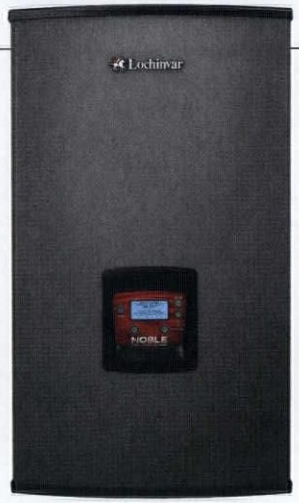


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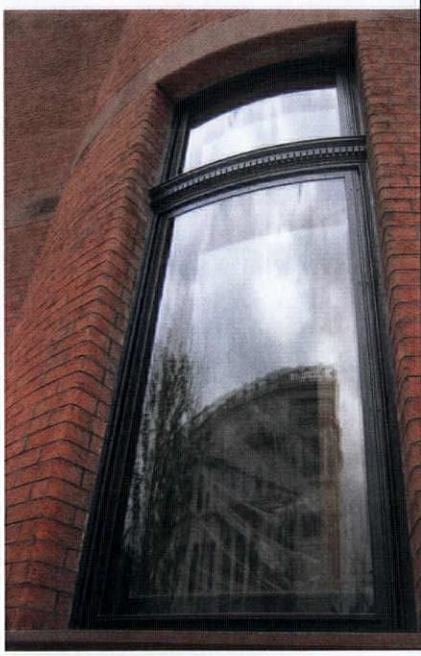
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Warming Up to Geothermal

Undertaking a major HVAC overhaul, or simply want to keep a lid on future energy costs? Geothermal is catching on with historic-home owners.

By Mary Ellen Polson



As part of a vertical-loop geothermal installation, a drilling rig prepares to bore deep holes in the front yard of a Queen Anne house in a historic Syracuse neighborhood.

Perhaps your treasured hot-water or steam system suffered a catastrophic freeze, or the forced-air HVAC system is reaching the end of its useful life. Or maybe heating and cooling bills in that rambling old pile you call home are cutting into retirement savings. If any of these circumstances sound familiar, your home may be a candidate for a geothermal HVAC system—even if the house is on a compact lot in a historic streetcar suburb.

Geothermal systems make use of the free, renewable energy stored in the earth. A geothermal heat pump uses the constant temperature underground as the exchange medium for heating and cooling, instead of outside air. Just a few feet below the surface, ground temperatures are significantly warmer than the air above during winter, and much cooler in summer, usually averaging around 50° F year round. For this reason, a geothermal heat pump uses less energy to warm indoor air when it's cold, and to cool the air when it's hot outside—all without directly burning any fossil fuel.

Types of Loops

The three most common types of loops for underground geothermal are (1) horizontal, (2) vertical, and (3) pond loops. All three require major excavation to lay the necessary piping.



TIP ● The capacity of a geothermal system is **measured in tons**. A 3-ton setup usually works for a home of about 2,000 square feet.





LEFT Expect to do a little landscaping after the system is in, as shown in this historic geothermal install in the Hudson Valley. **ABOVE** Curling the polyethylene pipes in overlapping loops gives this variation on the horizontal loop method the nickname "Slinky."

While the upfront costs of geothermal are about twice that of conventional systems, the energy savings are so significant that most homeowners will recoup their costs in five to 10 years—sooner, factoring in the state and federal tax incentives now available. (Several of the larger geothermal companies also offer financing on favorable terms.) The whisper-quiet systems make a lot of sense for older houses with generous floor plans and minimal insulation, too.

The key component of any geothermal system is the ground loop system. Composed of high-density polyethylene pipes that contain a water–ethanol mix to prevent freezing, the loop system is buried below the freeze line. During cold weather, the temperature-sensitive fluid circulates and picks up heat from the steady temperatures underground and delivers it to the house. The heat pump concentrates the thermal energy and transfers it to conventional ductwork or an under-floor radiant system, which circulates the heat. In warm months, the process is reversed and the cooler fluid exhausts heat out of the house. As a bonus, the unit can assist with hot-water heating.

There are several types of ground loop systems, and all require quite a bit of earth moving and lawn repair. The most common and cost-effective is the ***horizontal loop system***. Piping is laid in trenches from 100' to 400' in length. Installing the trenches requires enough land, of course—at least .25 of an acre, and often up to .75 acre. In a variation called the "Slinky," looping the pipe in overlapping circles allows the use of more pipe in a shorter trench, cutting down on installation costs and permitting horizontal installation on smaller sites.

Vertical loop systems are used in locations where there isn't enough land to lay a horizontal system, like small lots in historic neighborhoods. In a vertical system, holes are bored with a drilling rig, and a pair of pipes with special U-bend fittings inserted into the holes. A typical home requires three to five bores with about a 15' separation between the holes.

If you're lucky enough to have a pond a half-acre or larger on your property, your home may be a candidate for a ***pond loop system***. A series of coiled, closed loops are sunk to the bottom of

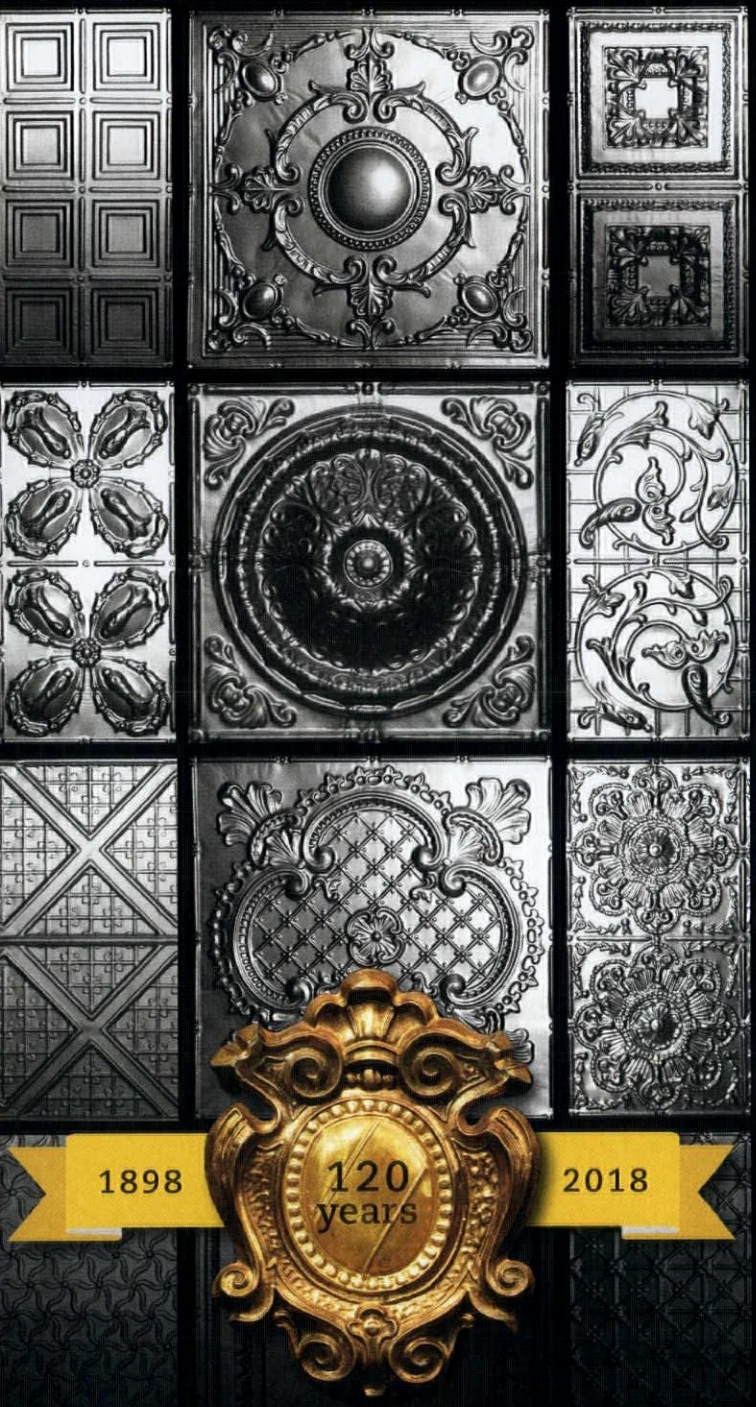


GET A TAX BREAK

In February, federal tax credits were reinstated for residential and commercial geothermal installations in the U.S. The tax credits cover any geothermal projects begun since January 2017 and will cover new ones that get underway by January 2022. To meet the requirements, the system must use the ground or ground water as a thermal energy source to heat the dwelling. The system must also meet Energy Star standards in effect at the time of installation.

The credits provide a tax break of between 22 and 30 percent of the total cost of the system, including installation costs. For a $30,000 system installed during the window of maximum credits, that's a potential cost savings of $9,000. State credits, where available, can bump up the after-tax cash savings significantly. In New York State, for example, a 4-ton system is eligible for a $6,000 rebate. That's a lot of dough.

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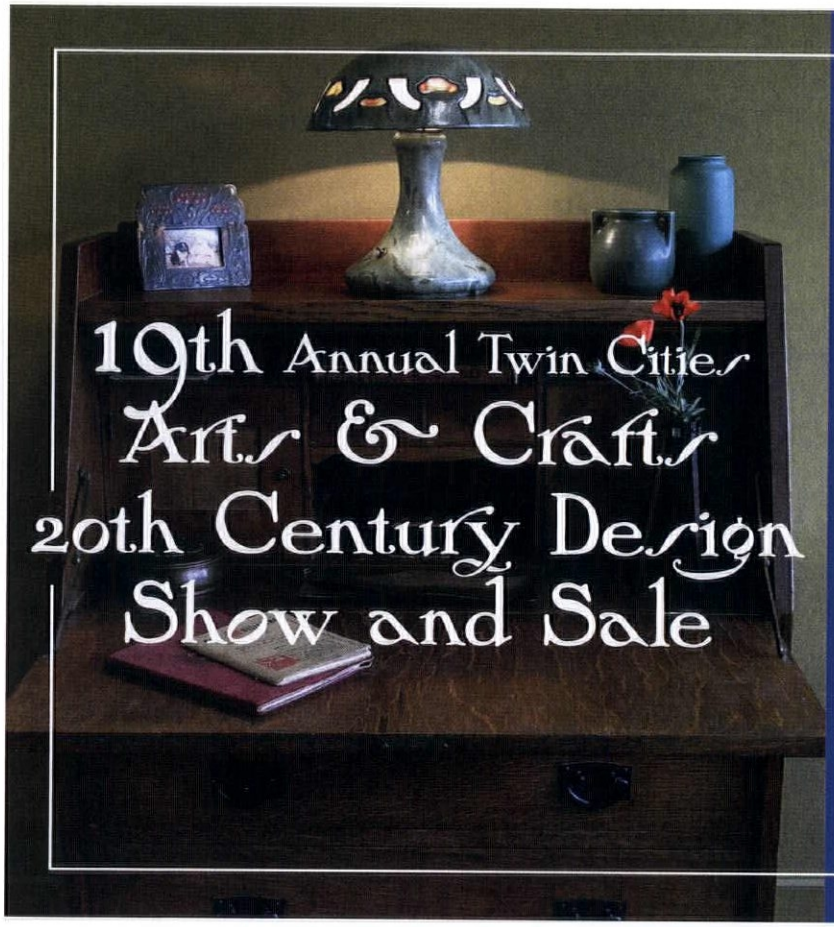
About 70 percent of the energy used by a geothermal heat-pump system comes in the form of renewable energy from the ground. According to the EPA, high-efficiency geothermal systems are on average 48 percent more efficient than gas furnaces, 75 percent more efficient than oil furnaces, and 43 percent more efficient when in the cooling mode. Because geothermal pump heating systems do not burn fossil fuels to produce heat, they generate far fewer greenhouse gases than a conventional furnace. They also provide higher air quality because there are no emissions of carbon monoxide. In general, a 3-ton residential geothermal heat-pump system produces an average of about one pound less carbon dioxide per hour compared to a conventional system. Over a 20-year span, that's enough to remove the equivalent of 10 metric tons of carbon from the atmosphere. If 100,000 geothermal units go into service in the next few years, it could save as much energy as removing nearly 60,000 cars from U.S. highways.

the water body. The loop is connected to the house via more pipe laid in a horizontal trench. Water-to-water heat transfer is much more efficient than water-to-air heat transfer, so this type of geothermal system is highly economical and efficient.

Whichever loop type is required, bear in mind that the life of a typical geothermal heat pump is 15 to 20 years; loop systems can last 20 years or more. Forced-air systems will require a water-to-air heat pump, while hydronic radiant heating systems require water-to-water heat pumps.

Although geothermal heat pumps can be integrated easily with existing systems such as forced-air or radiant floor heating, you'll need space in a utility room or basement for all necessary components. Where there is no ductwork in place, a delivery system will have to be designed and installed, preferably one that disturbs as few original walls and ceilings as possible. For a two-storey house, for example, it may make sense to install a split system, placing ductwork and an air handler for the first floor in the basement, with a similar set-up in the attic to serve the upper floor.

Designing and installing a geothermal HVAC system is a complex process. It goes without saying that this is not a do-it-yourself project. Look for a contractor/engineering firm with significant experience in geothermal installations, preferably one certified by the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association (igshpa.org).



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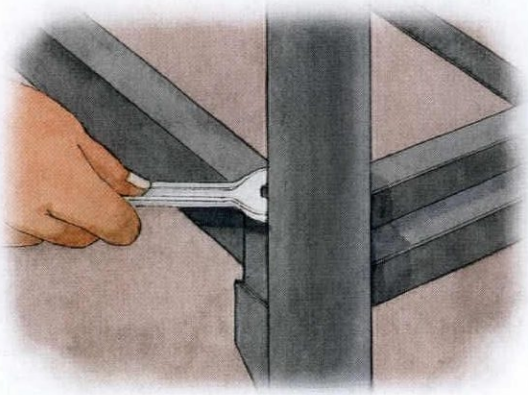
Tweaks to Add Comfort & Livability

Addressing subtle things that get in the way: a squeak in the night, a bad layout, blank walls.

By Lynn Elliott

HOUR

Tighten a Squeaky Bed Frame

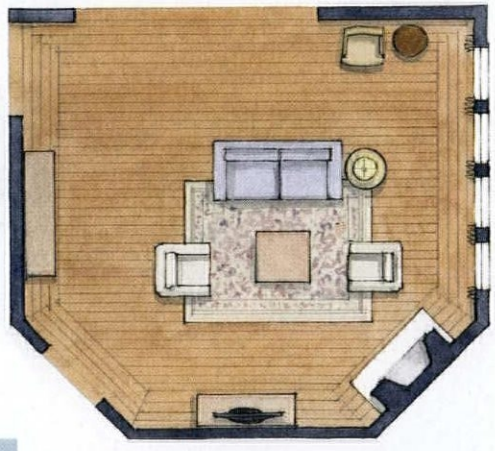


Squelch the squeak and avoid sleepless nights. First be sure the noise isn't coming from mattress or box spring: remove them from the frame. Next, examine the bed frame and rock any posts. If you find a loose bolt, add a washer and tighten with a wrench. Wood on wood also makes noise: try to pinpoint the spot and rub two or more coats of paraffin or wax on the area. For slats that rub, create a buffer by lining each joint where the bed frame and the slat meet with old socks or T-shirt rags. (Wax also works.) For all-metal bed frames, lubricate rubbing joints with WD-40. Reassemble the bed and test it. If it still squeaks, look again: is it the box spring against the frame? Use the old-sock trick. Check for uneven legs, leveling with a shim, felt or a cork coaster, or bit of towel.

DAY

Adjust Layout of the Living Room

Though often full of character, rooms in old houses can be challenging to arrange. Corner fireplaces and lots of doors are typical culprits.



STEP 1

For a living room with an angled fireplace, first choose the focal point of the room. Is it a view, the fireplace—or, let's face it, the TV? Orient seating towards the TV if that makes sense, but keep a focal point like a fireplace in mind by considering sight lines from seats. In the arrangement shown, the focal point is the TV, but the fireplace may be enjoyed by someone on the sofa and one of the chairs. Pull furniture away from walls and group for balance and easier conversation. Place a coffee table at least 18 inches from the sofa.



STEP 2

Consider how traffic might flow through the room—very important if there are multiple doorways in a small room. Don't block pathways, and keep furniture pieces at least 30 inches apart in pass-through areas. This arrangement with a central seating plan allows flow to all of the doorways even in a small space. Remember to scale the furniture to the size of the room. A love seat or a chaise-type sofa may work better than a large couch. Choose pieces that can do double duty, too—an ottoman with storage, for example.

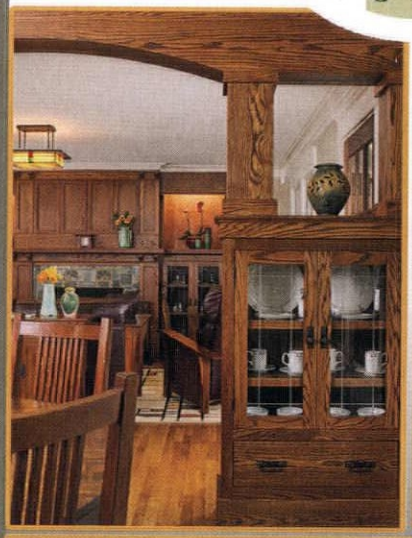
TIP ● For best viewing, **place furniture** 8–12 feet from the TV and keep viewing angle no more than 30°.

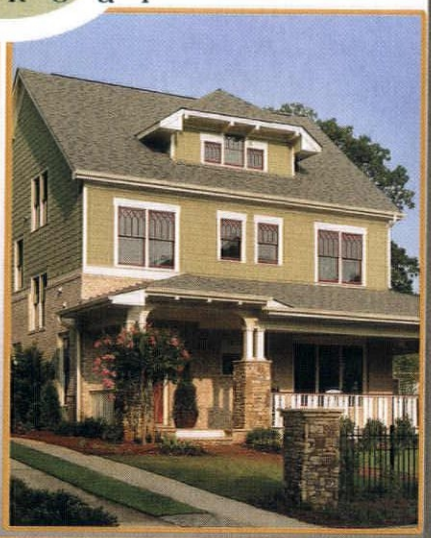
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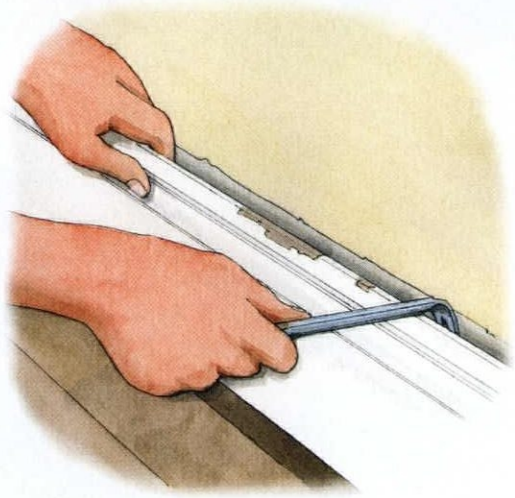


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WEEKEND

Add Character with a Beadboard Wainscot

If you plan and buy ahead, you can get this room-transforming project done over a weekend. A wainscot lends proportion, architectural detail, texture, and tradition to a kitchen or bath, hallway, or informal room.



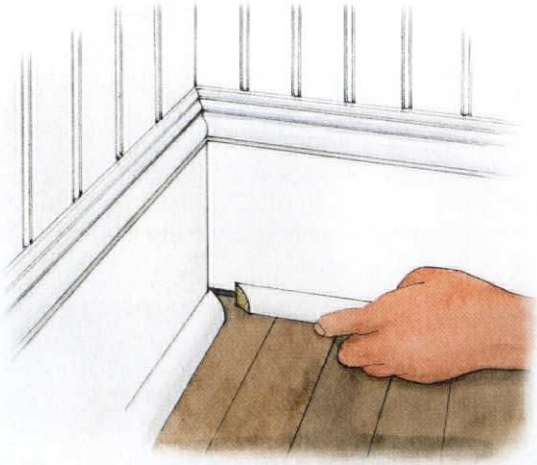
STEP 1

A beadboard wainscot generally comes to chair-rail height. The usual mistake is to set the chair rail much too high. Classical proportions and historical precedent suggest that the chair rail (and thus wainscot height) be about 30" from the floor, taking into consideration the ceiling height—though for practical reasons a wainscot is often taller in kitchens and baths. You do not want visually to split the walls in half, or even close. Once you have settled on a height, snap a level chalk line around the room. With a stud finder, mark stud locations along the level line and the floor. Remove any existing baseboard—carefully, if you intend to reinstall it. Measure from floor to level line to get the height for cutting planks.

STEP 2

Working left to right, install the first tongue-and-groove plank (or panel) in a visible outside or inside corner. Apply construction adhesive to the back and smooth with a notched trowel. With the grooved side abutting a corner, nail the board in place with panel nails. Repeat for the next board, sliding its grooved end onto the tongue of the first, leaving 1/16" space for expansion. Make sure the top of the board is flush with the level line and check for plumb. Press to bond adhesive with the wall. At studs, nail through a groove in the bead. Cut out outlet openings as needed. The last board along a wall may need to be planed to fit. Slide it into place from the top down. Move to the next wall.



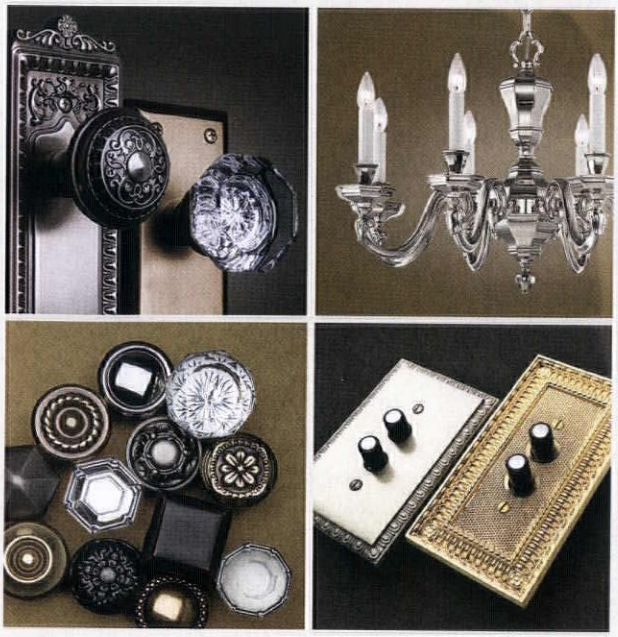


STEP 3

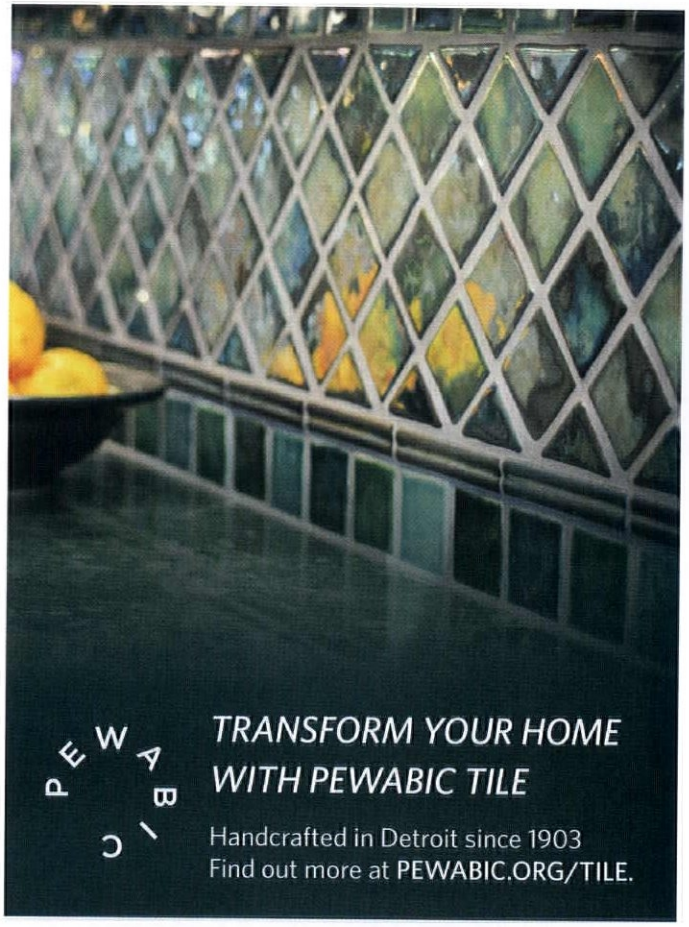
Online tutorials can help with making pre-mitered outside corner pieces, notching window stool ends, etc. Install the chair rail (moulding at the top of wainscot), securing with finish nails. Miter corners. Re-attach the old baseboard or install a new one with finish nails. Check that chair rail and baseboard are parallel. Adjust baseboard if necessary; use quarter-round shoe moulding to cover a gap between floor and baseboard. Caulk the gap between chair rail and wall. Fill any visible nail holes with spackle (for a painted wainscot) or wood putty (for clear-finished wood). Paint or stain and varnish as desired.

TIP ● Allow wood wainscot boards to **acclimate in the room** for at least 48 hours before installation.

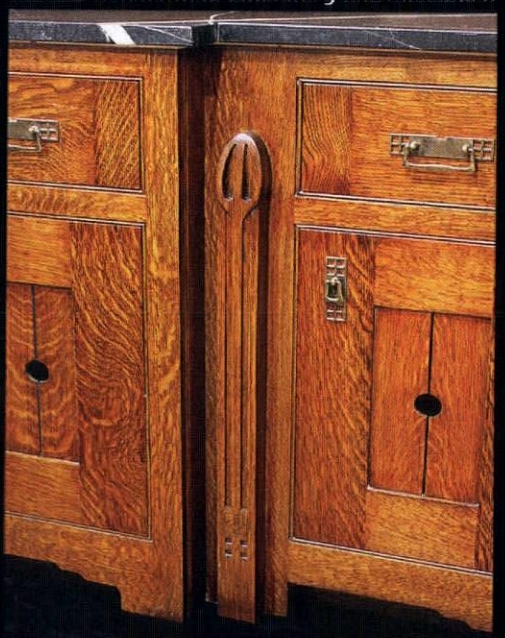
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Bath Beauty From Scraps

A no-style bathroom gets an affordable makeover, courtesy of reclaimed and salvaged materials and good design. No need to gut the room. **By Joanne Palmisano**

The concept of "salvage" has various meanings in this project, the budget-friendly makeover of a 1980s "Jack and Jill" bathroom in a Stowe, Vermont, townhouse. The cabinet is an example of salvage *in situ*: the existing one was kept and repainted. The wood countertop and sinks came from salvage dealers. The tile that makes the room unique was purchased online—affordable leftovers from an unrelated project. The introduction of those of old sinks and vintage wood warmed the room considerably. New textures and colors created a total bathroom makeover for under a grand!

ABOVE Remnant tile bought online lends a subtle exoticism to the room. **BEFORE** With lacquered dark wood, laminate, and an ugly mirror, the room was stuck in 1980.

THE COST

CABINET PAINT	$25
WOOD COUNTER	$200
SALVAGE SINKS (2@$20)	$40
FAUCETS (2@$125)	$250
TILE (REMNANT)	$150
SCONCES (2@$100)	$200
MIRRORS (2@$50)	$100
TOTAL	$965

design approach

1. BASE CABINET

I saw no reason to discard the decent if generic vanity cabinet. Instead, I updated its looks with light-grey paint and new hardware. Good-enough cabinets can be sanded and stained or painted to give them an entirely new look. The old wood must be thoroughly clean and rid of soap scum, then lightly sanded and primed before painting.

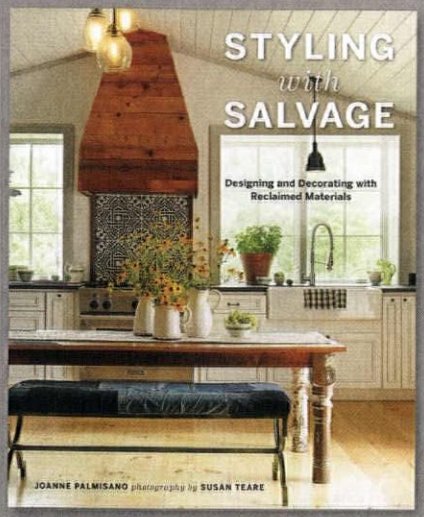
2. SALVAGE ITEMS

The laminate countertop was replaced with a top made of reclaimed vintage wood. I found some pieces that were nice and thick—for both aesthetic and structural reasons, you don't want a thin countertop. The boards were glued up, sanded and sealed, and then holes were cut for the sinks. It's important to thoroughly seal wood used near water. The rimmed, drop-in, porcelain-on-cast-iron sinks came from the ReSource Building Material Store in Burlington, Vermont.

In turn, everything we removed from the existing bathroom was donated to a local rebuild center—who sent someone to pick it all up.

3. THE TILE

I found this fabulous, matte-finish, patterned cement tile online, left over from someone else's project. There was just enough to entirely cover the feature wall behind the sinks vanity. The width of the grout line was chosen to ensure that full (uncut) tiles would be used at top and bottom of the wall installation. New, furniture-like mirrors and updated lighting finish the transformation.



STYLING WITH SALVAGE

Designing and Decorating with Reclaimed Materials
By Joanne Palmisano
The Countryman Press, W.W. Norton, 2018
237 pages, $27.95

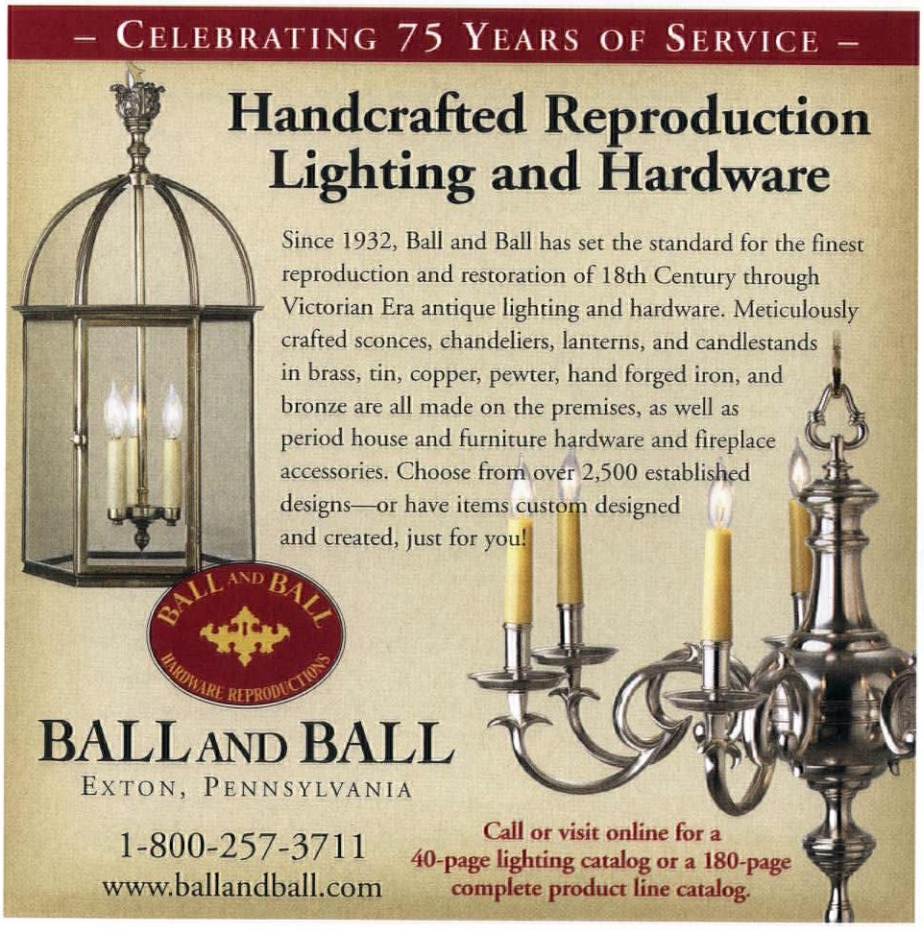
Joanne Palmisano spent her childhood looking for old bottles buried in the backyard and making things out of scraps she found in her parents' junk room. Now she's an in-demand interior designer known for saving what can be saved and introducing vintage pieces. Her rooms are timeless and friendly—but there's sophistication in her work. High-end clients include Vermont's venerable Basin Harbor resort on Lake Champlain.

"I have a problem," Joanne says. "I'm totally addicted to old stuff, vintage goods, salvaging, junk—whatever you call it; sometimes it's the hunt, or the thrill of getting a good deal, but I'm always drawn by the stories behind the objects." She reuses, she up-cycles, she mixes and matches, but always with the intention of keeping the patina ... and keeping old things out of the landfill.

The salvage industry "creates and supports thousands of jobs," Palmisano says, including the artisans and tradespeople called in when a thing is repurposed or installed. "The local economy benefits."

This is Joanne Palmisano's third book on salvage. It starts out with encouraging advice. Projects follow, many done for her own clients, accompanied by vivacious hints and tips about everything from the display of collections to kitchen and bath design. —***P. Poore***





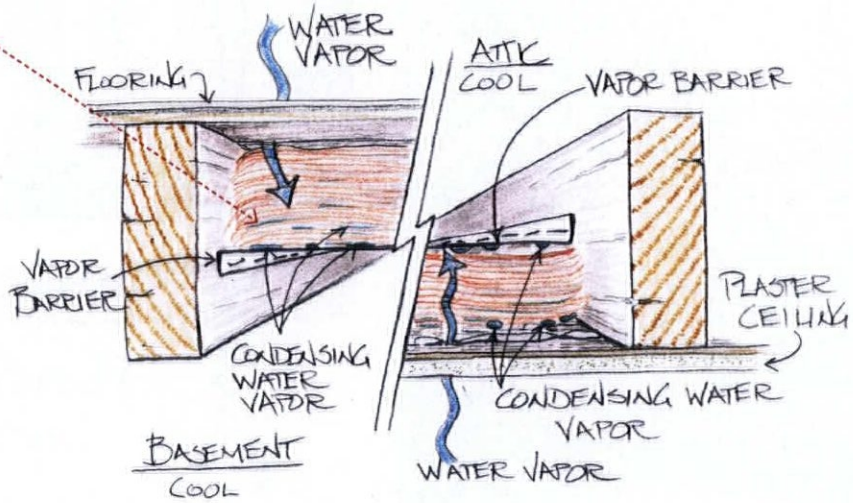
Placing Vapor Barriers

Insulation has been around for centuries, but it's gotten more sophisticated with the energy-efficient homes of the past 50 years. We quantify R-values and use vapor barriers to prevent moisture migration. The purpose of insulation is to retard the movement of air, an excellent insulator, within a space. The purpose of a vapor barrier—whether it's foil, paper, or plastic sheeting—is to prevent water vapor from moving into a colder space and condensing. In cold northern climates the barrier is most often positioned on the interior face of the insulation. In warm climates the vapor barrier is positioned toward the exterior side. In the moderate middle ... it gets complicated. Here are rules for attic and basement insulation. **By Ray Tschoepe**

WRONG WAY

USING THE BARRIER AS A FINISH

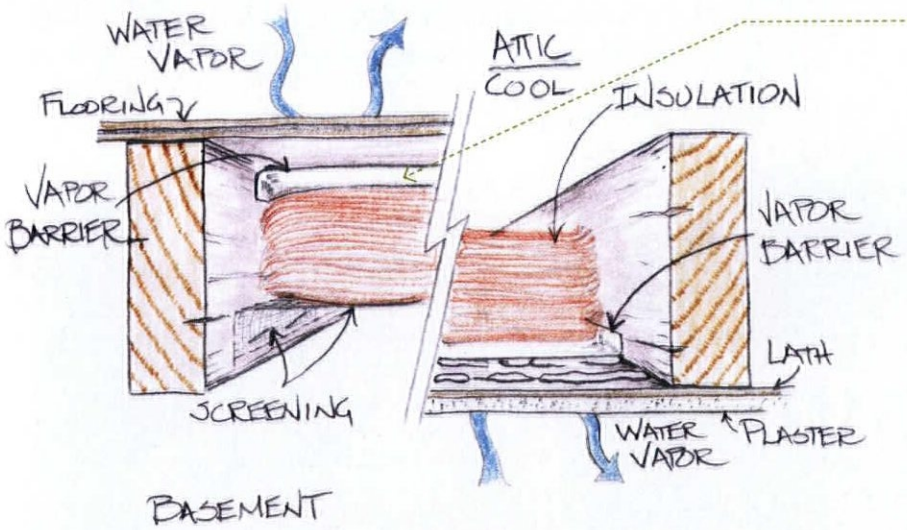
Novices installing insulation in the basement ceiling are tempted to position the vapor barrier on the underside (the basement side), because it gives a clean look, is easier to fasten, and protects the installer from the itchy insulation. It is wrong, however. Lightweight screening under the fiberglass helps. In an attic, it may seem neater to staple the paper barrier side up, but again, that's wrong. The barrier needs to face the heated space below.



RIGHT WAY

TOWARD THE HEATED SPACE

For the ceiling of a cool basement under a heated level: It's always best to position the vapor barrier toward the heated space, that is, just under its floor. The opposite is true for an unheated attic, where the vapor barrier is usually placed against the ceiling of the space below. In both cases, the barrier holds back water vapor generated in the house, preventing it from condensing on cooler surfaces in basement or attic. Wet insulation is less effective and can lead to peeling paint and rot.



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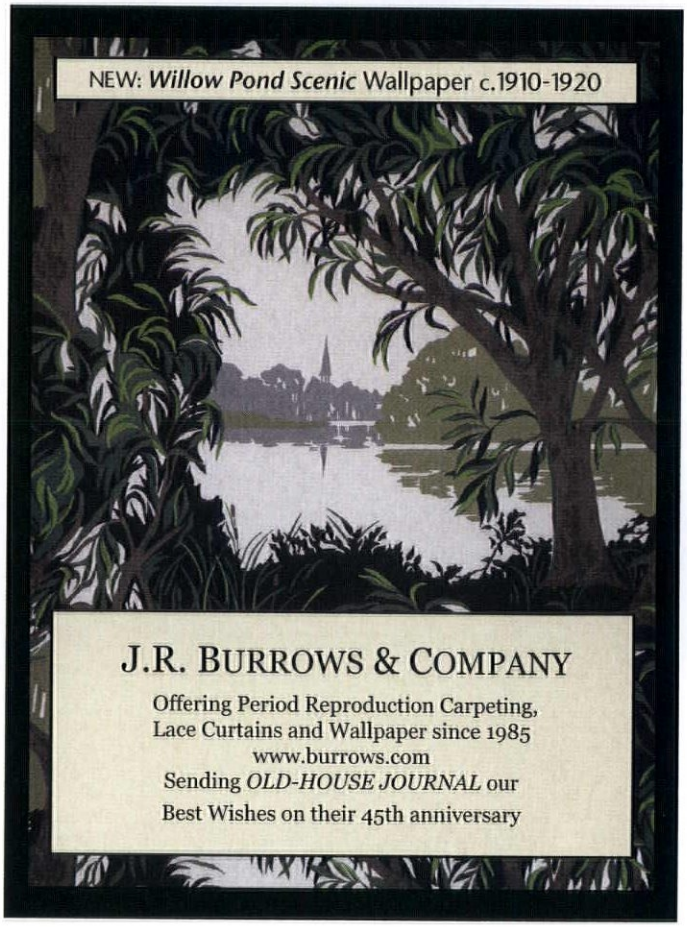
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"We saw condensation—and sometimes the toilet seat was already warm to the touch!"



We have a 1930s camp in the mountains, where temps sometimes drop below zero in winter and the bathroom gets chilly. During a cold snap, we noticed the water in the toilet was hot, as if the plumber had deliberately switched the lines. Sometimes the seat is actually warm to the touch! We wonder whether the toilet was deliberately plumbed this way to keep it from freezing in subzero weather. *—Jim Scamman*

Share Your Story!

What have you, your spouse, pet, contractor, previous owner (you get the picture) screwed up? Email us at **lviator @aimmedia.com**.

THE FIX

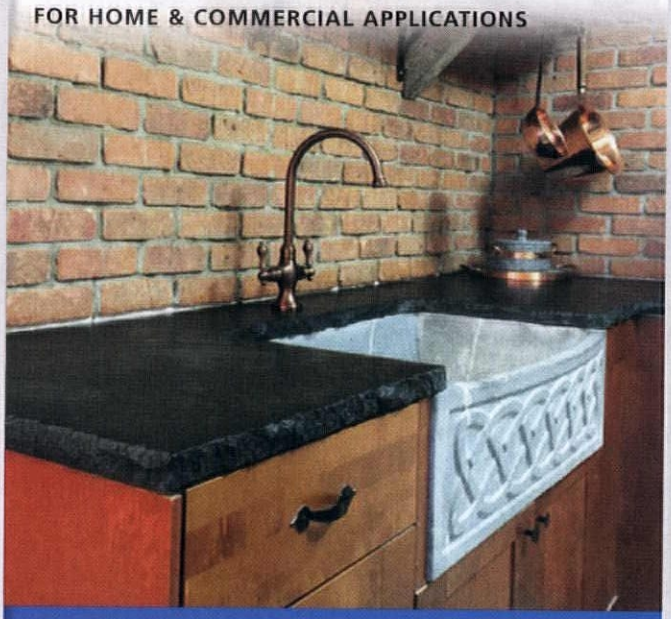
The reason you have hot water in your toilet isn't because someone wanted to keep the water from freezing. You have a problem that should be addressed. Background: Most toilets have mixing valves to prevent condensation, allowing *some* hot water to flow into the cold water line to warm it. When the water leaks in continuously, however, the hot water dominates the cold and you get a tankful of hot water. It's not bad for your toilet, but it could be hazardous to your wallet, running up your utility bill.

If the water in the toilet has always been hot, the hot and cold water lines running to the toilet may indeed have been installed incorrectly—something that a good plumber can fix. If the problem surfaced more recently, it's more likely the cause is a bad flapper or a bad fill valve. To check, remove the tank lid and flush the toilet. If the flapper doesn't seat properly after it has dropped, the toilet will keep running: water will continue to enter the tank and flow out of the overflow tube. To fix the leaky valve, adjust the float level using the fill valve's water adjustment clip or arm. For a float-cup valve, squeeze the two sides of the metal clip together, then slip the clip down the rod. If it's a float-ball valve, lower the water level by bending the float arm slightly downward.

If the toilet refills properly, test it for a bad flapper by adding a few drops of food coloring or a colored dye tablet (find at a hardware store) to the tank water. Wait 20 minutes. If any trace of colorant appears in the toilet bowl, you've found the source of the leak. Replace the flapper, or have a plumber replace it for you.

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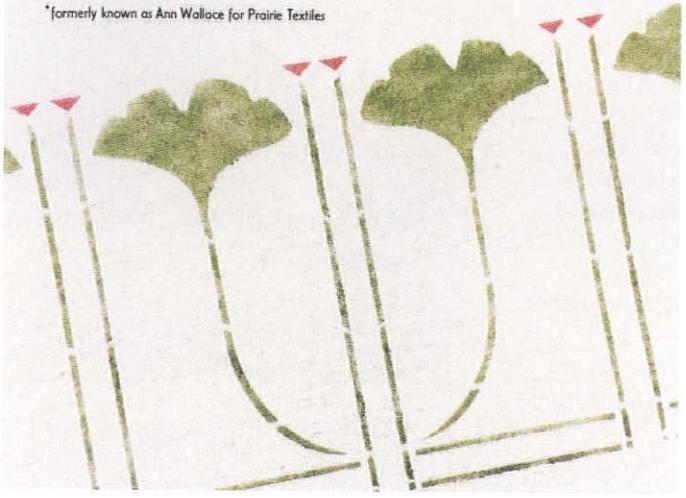
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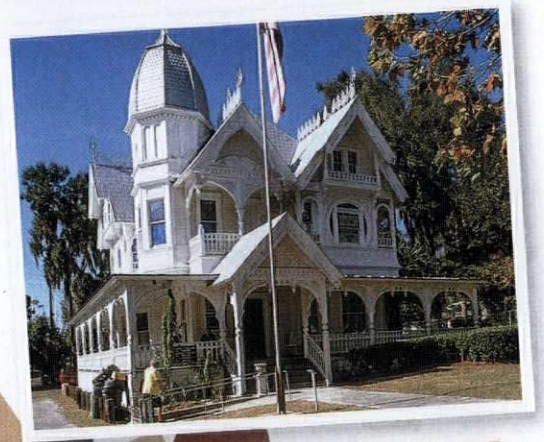


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RIGHT This spectacular 1893 Queen Anne in Florida is a tour-de-force designed by Knoxville architect George Barber.



Q: I am an addicted restorer of 1890–1920-era properties. In an OHJ issue, I noted patterned tile that I have not been able to find online—can you tell me the source? I'm working on an 1896 George Barber-designed Queen Anne house: Do you think that tile would go well? Instead of small white and black hex mosaics? *—David Barzen, Des Moines, Iowa*

A: A Barber Queen Anne can take over-the-top decorative materials, and these Victorian tiles were certainly used in 1896 in the U.S. You see them in the vestibule of many New York brownstones, for example. They were common in entryways, conservatories/solariums, and commercial spaces. Even in the 1890s, they were probably considered too expensive for a bath. But I think a Victorian Revival bathroom would look great with a geometric or encaustic tile floor!

These tiles are unglazed, which is good for being slip-proof, but they must be sealed—before grouting, in fact. They are porous; even standing water stains them. As long as you follow instructions for sealing them, you should be fine. (I have them in a plant room, and the seal has held up for 20 years now.)

The collage of tiles shown above includes both authentic, hand-molded clay encaustics (the little ones in blue and green) and also modern encaustics, which are decorated and then fired, and are cheaper and easier to install. Patterns, however, are absolutely authentic to English Victorian designs. The modern-type solid-color geometric and patterned encaustic tiles are from the English maker Original Style: **originalstyle.com** The company sells through dealers all over the U.S.; see "find retailer" on their website.

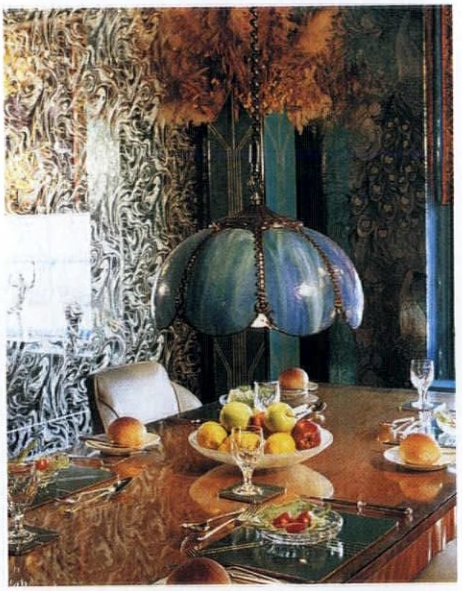
The difference between clay encaustics and modern floor tiles is explained at the website of the U.S. importer: **tile-source.com**. That company also handles the handmade, expensive encaustics made in England. *—Patricia Poore*

I have an antique table lamp with streaked glass in the shade, which a visitor called "slag glass." Is that the right terminology, and what does it mean?

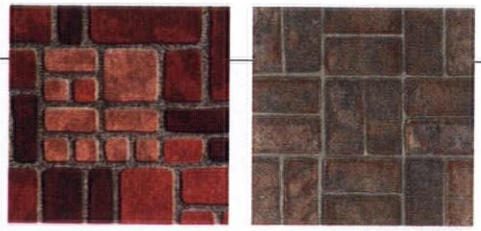
—Valerie W., Kansas City, Kans.

Slag glass is a relatively recent term for pressed, opaque glass with color streaks, first made in England in the 1880s. The belief was that the streaks were produced by the addition of slag from iron smelting works, hence the name. In the 19th century, slag glass was better known as marble or malachite glass, or marble vitro-porcelain.

Production techniques arrived with workers emigrating from northeast England to the U.S. in the late 19th century. Soon major manufacturers were using the swirling colors of slag glass in everything from lamps to tableware. Handel, Bradley and Hubbard, and even Tiffany produced lamps with slag-glass panels. Most tend to incorporate shades of green and amber, which cast a beautiful light under illumination, but you can find examples from greenish-blue to purple. Its peak of popularity here was during the 1910s and 1920s. *—Brian D. Coleman*



A chandelier incorporating slag-glass panels hangs over a table in a Jazz Age dining room.



A typical mid-century linoleum pattern, and Armstrong's sheet-vinyl herringbone brick.

A little "excavation" in my 1930s kitchen turned up a mid-century "brick" linoleum. I think I want to simulate but simplify that look. I was thinking of Armstrong laminate flooring L6541 in Brick Red. What do you think?

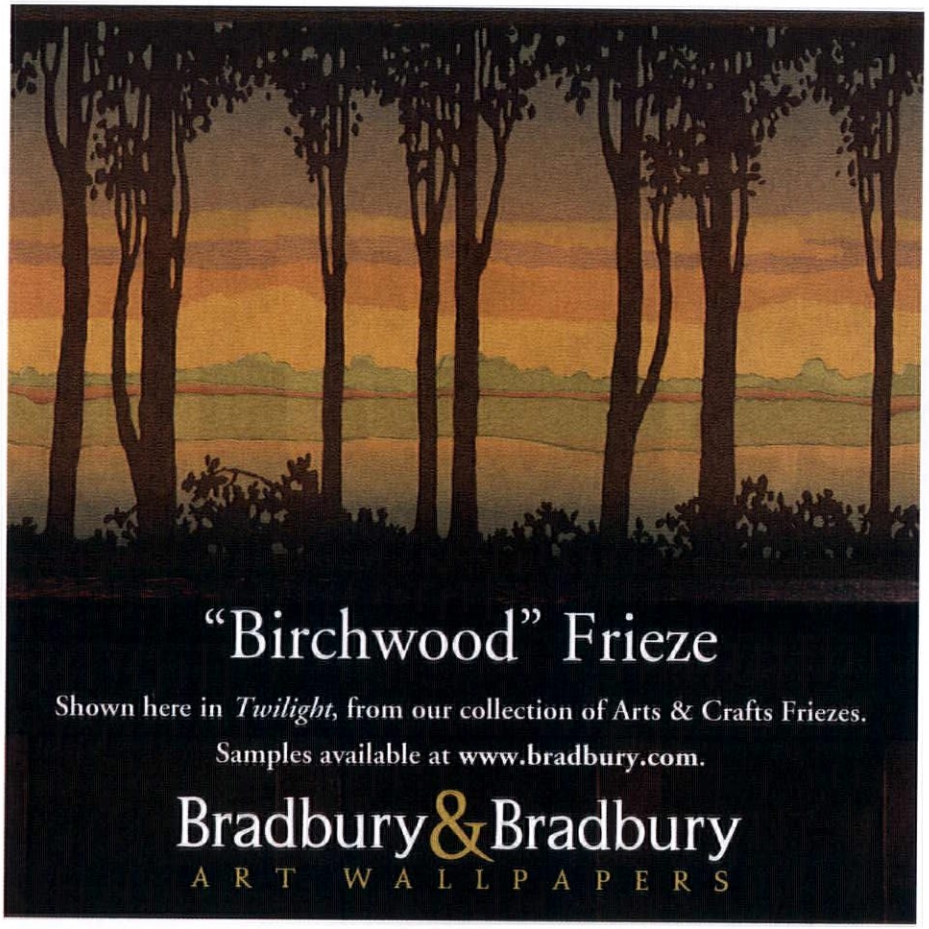
—Patricia Linden, Newark, Delaware

Laminate flooring is durable and approximates the look of wood or ceramic tile. Our contact at Armstrong Flooring tells us that L6541is not currently in production, and recommends instead B3162, which is very similar in style— basket-weave brick—except it is vinyl rather than laminate. With its low-gloss finish and resilience, it actually performs more like linoleum. Part of the CushionStep Mesita Vinyl Sheet collection, it is sold in 12-ft.-wide sheets. The subtle color is Colonial Red. See more at armstrongflooring.com/residential/en-us/ *—Patricia Poore*

My early 19th-century brick house has a moisture problem in basement walls, which a contractor called "rising damp." Is there such a thing?

—Richard Perrault, New Orleans, La.

Rising damp is indeed a condition, wherein the capillary action of masonry walls combines with a high water table to wick water from the ground—sometimes as high as the second storey. Before attempting mitigation, inspect the situation to make sure this is the real problem. True rising damp is actually somewhat rare; the moisture symptoms may be due to damaged or missing gutters. Qualified consultants include soil analysts. Google "Preservation Brief 39" to read a thorough description (nps.gov). *—the editors*



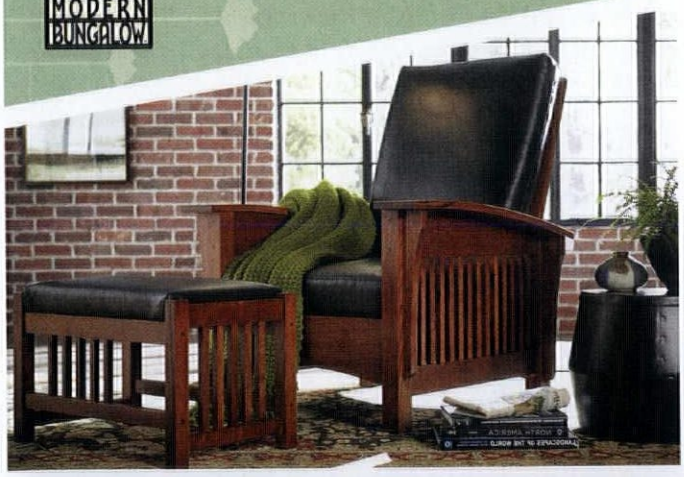


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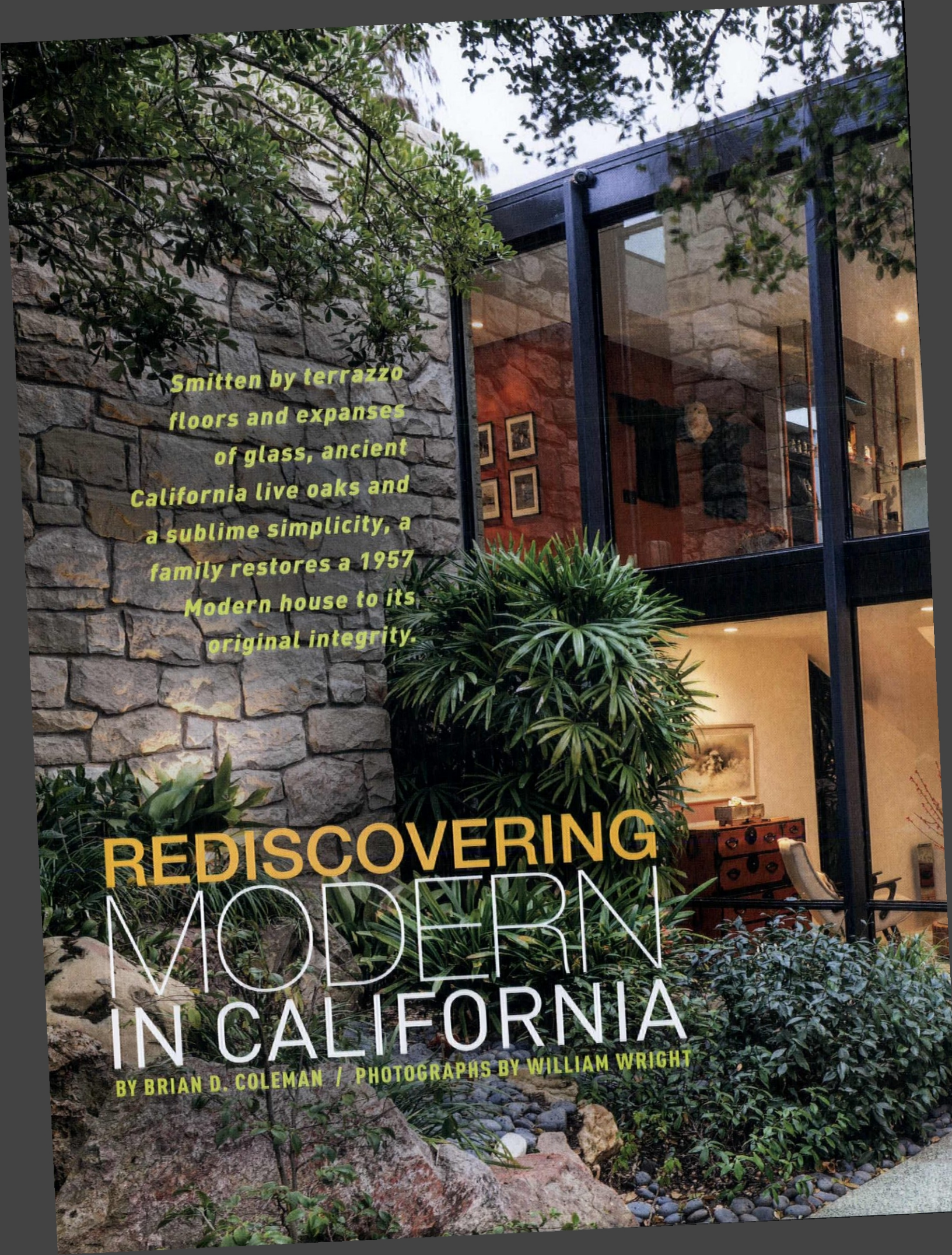
A serial restorer of old houses decides to build a new one. **page 98**

Battered piers built of local fieldstone, rounded rafter tails, cloudlift motifs in windows, and a stunning entry door interpret the work of Charles and Henry Greene 100 years later, and for the East Coast.

78 **REDISCOVERING MODERN**
A stunning 1957 California home.
+ STYLE: MID-CENTURY MODERN

90 **THE STORY OF FOREST OAKS**
A manor built in 1806, 1812, 1916.
+ THE HOUSE PAYS FOR ITSELF

98 **INSPIRED IN MAINE**
A famous house was in the family.
+ ASIAN INFLUENCE



Smitten by terrazzo floors and expanses of glass, ancient California live oaks and a sublime simplicity, a family restores a 1957 Modern house to its original integrity.

REDISCOVERING MODERN IN CALIFORNIA

BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN / PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM WRIGHT



Glass walls provide views of the yard and allow the house to flow seamlessly into the back garden. The upper-level glass balcony was added during the recent remodeling.









LEFT Family dog Ziggy takes a break in a vintage Scandinavian armchair. **ABOVE** The entry-level foyer leading to the backyard is set with an antique *tansu* chest, vintage lounge chairs, and a custom-design carpet. Woven carp swim across the custom carpet from The Rug Company (inset).

The story begins when an heir to the Singer sewing-machine fortune gave her son some land in 1957. Pyrns Hopkins had grown up here in Santa Barbara, in the large, early-20th-century house next door to the gifted land. He wanted something more modern for his own home. He contacted the well-known architects Thornton Ladd and John Kelsey, who'd designed the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, and asked them to design something contemporary—stylish and up-to-date, but with a relaxed California sensibility.

He got a house nestled amidst the lot's century-old coastal live oaks. It had the best of Modern Movement features: floor-to-ceiling glass walls warmed with rosewood paneling and built-in bookcases; a stone wall to anchor the living room; terrazzo floors to keep the house cool. Broad sliding doors open to terraced gardens, blurring the distinction between indoors and outside.

The decades and a succession of owners were not kind to the gracious house. By the time the current owners—empty nesters looking to simplify—found it, the house needed significant restoration. Metal-framed windows and sliding doors had rusted and warped. Walls had been covered with a shiny vinyl in the 1970s. The master bedroom on the east end was dark and uninviting. The original galley kitchen was small and cramped. The once-gleaming terrazzo floors had chipped and broken; one former owner had laid jarringly gaudy Mexican tiles over the terrazzo in the front and back entries. The new owners would come to realize that these problems were the tip of an iceberg.

They fell in love with the property, nevertheless. Its Modern bones were intact . . . and how the dappled light, filtered by the California live oaks outside, lit the glass-walled interior! The Modern-aesthetic restraint had an Asian elegance and serenity



MID-CENTURY CLASSICS
A low, mid-century sectional sofa centers the expansive, upper-level living room. Glass walls on three sides provide views of the gardens. The clean-lined teak entertainment center conceals television and stereo equipment.

FLAT ROOF OPTIONS FOR MID-CENTURY HOMES

Houses identified as Mid-century Modern often have flat or low-pitched roofs, which may lead to water pooling and drainage problems. This list of roofing-material options considers their pros and cons.

> BUILT-UP ROOFING Long the most common system, and least expensive, it uses multiple layers of asphalt-impregnated roofing felt and mopped tar (bitumen) topped with gravel for fire-retarding and UV protection. It protects the roof against wind, snow, and pooled water, but is out of favor as a petroleum product that gives off noxious fumes during application and beyond. It can be difficult to find a leak with this system. The black tar is not best for a hot climate.

> MODIFIED BITUMEN (MBR) roofing is related to tar and gravel, but uses a sheeting material made of several layers of polymer-modified bitumen. It's roll roofing applied with heat or liquid mastic, with a surface finish of small rock granules. The mineral surfacing is factory-applied and a reinforced layer provides better flexibility at low temperatures. Durable and easy to repair.

> RUBBER or EPDM (thermoset) roofs are made of recycled synthetic rubber. The membrane (black for UV protection or white for reflectivity) is chemical-, weather- and UV-resistant. It must be installed by a trained contractor, it's somewhat costly, and, while very durable, the roofing can be damaged by branches or foot traffic.

> PVC MEMBRANES (thermoplastic) are applied in rolls, and the seams heat-welded. They are pliable and durable with good puncture resistance—but PVC cannot be used with asphalt (tar), which destroys the membrane. A separator goes over existing asphalt.

> SPRAY POLYURETHANE FOAM (SPF) roof systems boast easy installation. A liquid is sprayed over the cleaned, existing roof and expands into a surface-conforming foam. SPF delivers thermal, air, and moisture barriers, resulting in a very high R-value per inch. With no seams, leaks are unlikely. A qualified, experienced contractor is a must, and the system is relatively expensive.



A KITCHEN BUILT TO SUIT

The original house was extended over the remodeled garage, now with three bays, to provide a new kitchen, bathroom, and office space. Warm, durable ipe wood flooring is a counterpoint to restored terrazzo floors in the rest of the house.

The collections of antique Japanese ceramics, **textiles, and woodcuts** are graceful accents. The open dining area is anchored by a *tansu* displaying **Russel Wright** water pitchers.

in keeping with the owners' interests and their collections of Japanese art and antiques.

THE FAMILY HIRED the late architect Peter Becker, who had worked with Charles Moore and Frank Gehry. Becker was clear on what was needed to restore the house's sophisticated simplicity while bringing it unpretentiously into the 21st century. Work began with remodeling of the garage that extended from the west end. It was enlarged to three bays, and the original house then extended over it to provide a new kitchen, office, and bathroom.

During early remodeling, severe dry rot (fungal decay) was discovered throughout the house. The owners joked that the thick vinyl wall covering was all that held the house together. Poorly drained water from the flat roof had caused such significant damage that all of the interior walls had to be stripped down to the studs and replaced. The roof would be torn off and redone



TOP On the upper level, expansive terrazzo floors and walls of glass keep spaces light and open. The dining area and kitchen including added space can be seen beyond. Vintage Japanese textiles hang over the stair railings. **ABOVE** Soft-hued, mid-century Russel Wright "American Modern" pitchers designed in 1937 sit in front of antique Japanese fans on the wall—an unexpected but complementary pairing. **OPPOSITE** A nickel-plated steel dining table designed for Knoll by Warren Platner in 1966 centers the up-to-date kitchen.



A MASTER BATH ADDED

The new bath off the master bedroom is modern and serene with veined marble counters, cool slate floors, and soft grey concrete walls. Like the steel-framed glass walls and new landscaping, the room has a Japanese sensibility.

in a waterproof, state-of-the-art MBR system.

It didn't go well. Their general contractor had to be dismissed mid-project, and the owners found themselves with a house that had no roof, walls stripped to the studs, and no contractor.

Happily, a good referral from friends introduced the couple to another project manager and a contractor who did period-sensitive work. Both cost and time estimates were exceeded, however. A major challenge was how to match the existing steel-framed windows and doors. Their very narrow silhouettes were no longer available, as most companies today offer wide aluminum frames. The team located a company that had constructed steel-framed windows for Richard Neutra-designed houses. They were able to exactly duplicate the vintage steel frames.

The existing terrazzo floors were restored, with patient patching and then polishing with a diamond-bit grinder. They shine now as they did when they were installed.

After several years of restoration, the house was finally intact. In the new kitchen, durable ipe (*ee-pay*), also known as Brazilian walnut, was laid for the floors. A dining table designed by Warren Platner for Knoll in 1966, and still in production, sits at one end of the kitchen for informal meals.

Working with designer Randy Franks, the homeowners chose Modern Movement furnishings for the living room, to complement the original floor-to-ceiling bookcases and rosewood paneling. The room was softened with a neutral grey carpet and low, simple seating—an L-shape sectional and sculptural period armchairs, which surround a marble-top coffee table. The owners' Asian collections have become graceful accents.

 FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 119.

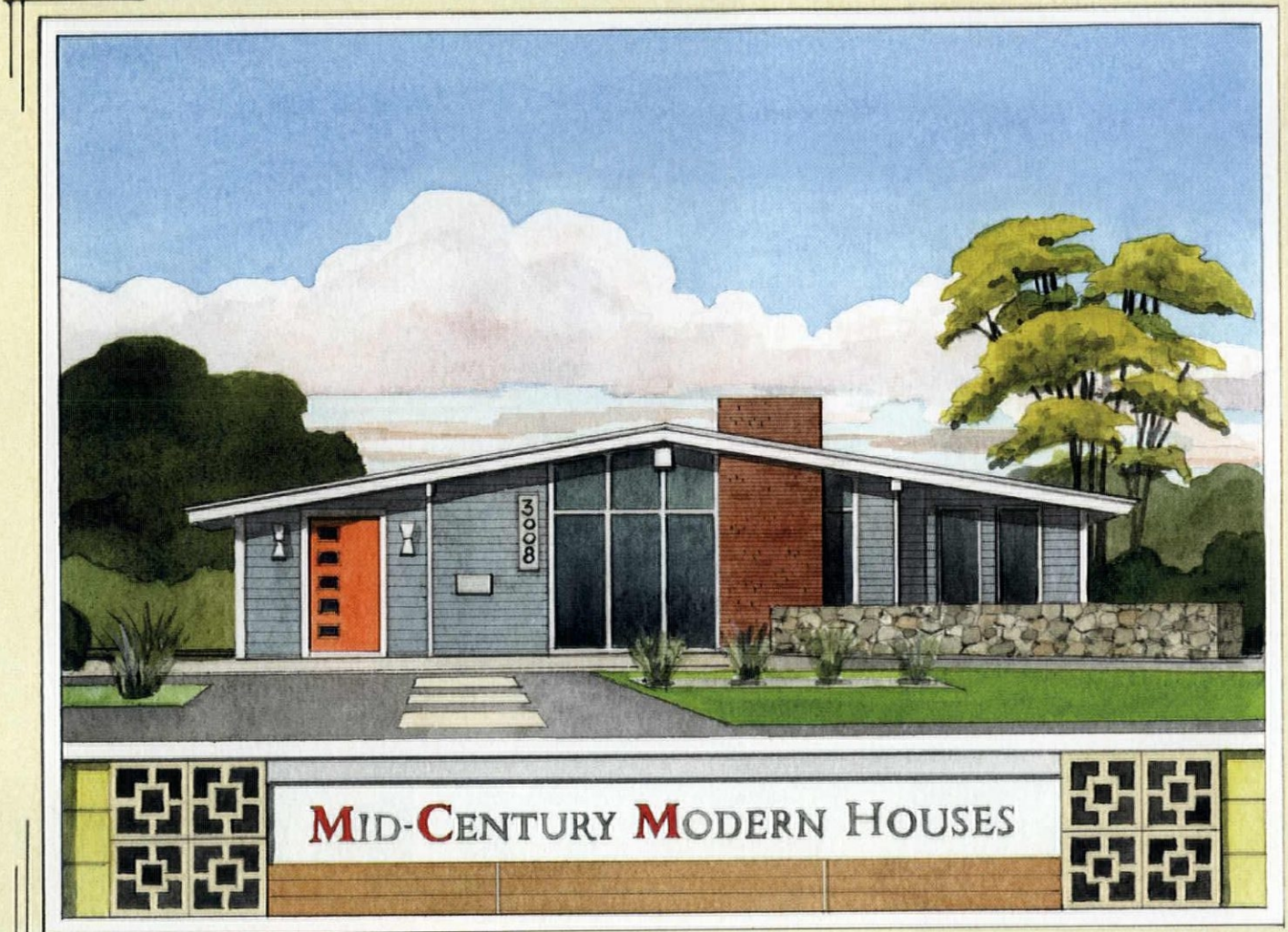




BELOW The living room and the master bedroom beyond open to the upper terrace landscaped as a Japanese rock garden. **ABOVE/RIGHT** Stone steps lead from the lower yard to the upper terrace. Grounds were landscaped by renowned Santa Barbara designer Eric Nagelmann, who conserved the natural beauty of the site's California live oaks, and added lush ferns, palms, and succulents.







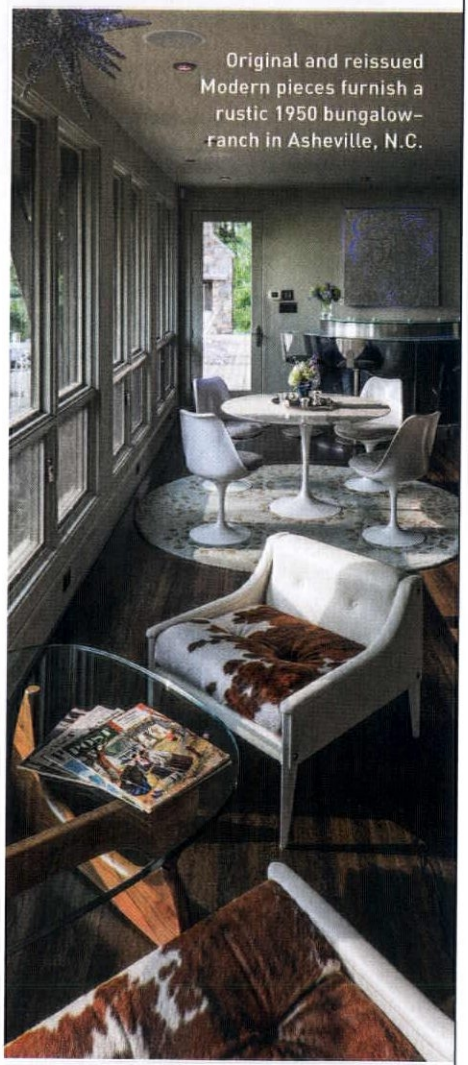
"The austere modernism of the **Bauhaus** school . . . proved to be more beloved for skyscrapers than for homes. Instead, another **mainstream Modern** style, originally called simply **Contemporary**, dominated avant-garde domestic architecture at mid-century. These houses were greatly influenced by **Wright's Usonian** houses."

—VIRGINIA SAVAGE McALESTER

MODERN HOUSES 1932–1970

AN INTRODUCTION BEGINS WITH THE GENERATION AFTER THE BUNGALOW. By Patricia Poore

Mid-century Modern is not one style; instead it describes a design movement of the middle decades of the 20th century. It often refers to the postwar era, ca. 1945 to 1965, but, in many discussions of architecture, antecedents are included, moving the time frame back to the 1930s or even the 1920s. MCM comprises several house types and styles. The importance of this period is magnified by the sheer number of houses built as the country rebounded from the Depression and World War II.



Original and reissued Modern pieces furnish a rustic 1950 bungalow-ranch in Asheville, N.C.

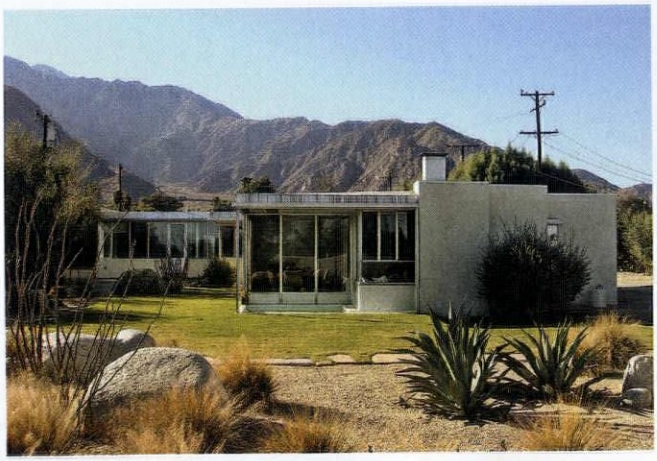
HISTORY PROFESSOR George Marcus recently wrote a book entitled *Total Design, Architecture and Interiors of Iconic Modern Houses*. What's on the cover? Not a house by Schindler or Neutra, Gropius or even Wright. No, it's Greene & Greene's Gamble House in Pasadena, an American Arts & Crafts exemplar built in 1908. Marcus's lineup of iconic modern houses starts with the Prairie School and work by Charles Rennie Mackintosh—that is, proto-modern houses, followed by those of van der Rohe, Saarinen, and Aalto. In her updated *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia McAlester broadly classifies Prairie and Craftsman houses as "modern" architecture. The link has been made, a continuum established.

The genesis of Mid-century Modern houses is easy to trace to the preceding Arts & Crafts movement and houses of the Prairie School. Substitute concrete for its carefully laid Roman brick, and plate glass for the leaded windows, and Wright's Robie House is recognizable as a precursor of International Style. Arts & Crafts and American Modern styles share a dislike of overt historicism and ornamentation. The forms are low, the distinction between indoors and outside is blurred. Built-ins help assure that the interiors are uncluttered. A simplified hearth is the focal point in an open plan.

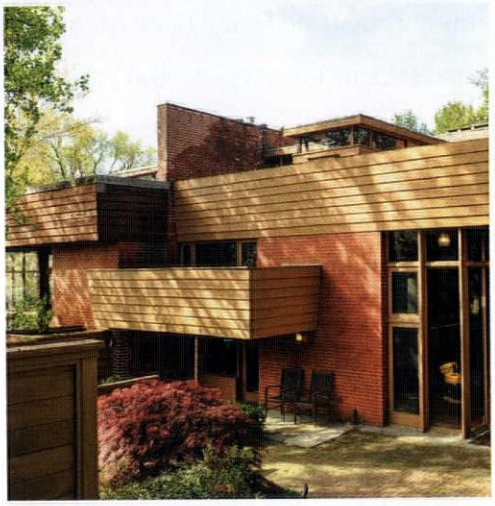
With a tremendous building boom starting in the 1920s, California was a hotbed for mid-century residential design. Important names include Joseph Eichler, a philosophical developer who brought modernism to family homes in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles. Architect Richard Neutra (who spent time at Wright's Taliesin in Wisconsin)

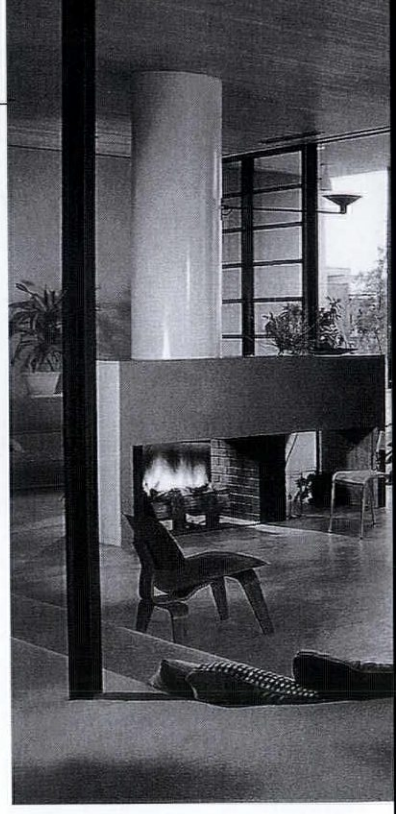
the HALLMARKS

- **GROUND-HUGGING** massing and horizontal lines, seen especially in windows, follow the flat or low-pitched roof free of dormers. Tucked into the landscape, many houses appear to be one level. The sheltered entry is downplayed.
- **LARGE WINDOWS** and generous glazing are common: consider the glazed gable in Contemporary houses, the window walls and ribbon windows of International Style, and wide "picture windows" in suburban examples.
- **DESIGN AUSTERITY**, though most pronounced in the International Style, is apparent in Modern houses and even postwar ranches. Casings are absent or unadorned, no turnings are seen in porch parts, wall surfaces are plain.
- **MODERNITY** shows up in a more open interior plan, which often segregates the public area from bedrooms, and also in the adoption of such postwar materials as plate glass, plywood, concrete, and laminates.









ABOVE Interior of Case Study House No. 9, late 1940s, by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen. **FROM LEFT, CLOCKWISE** Near Philadelphia, a revolutionary house by Frank Lloyd Wright, built in 1939 as four pinwheeling units of brick, glass, and cypress. Miller house, 1937, by Richard Neutra, Palm Springs, Calif. Floating fireplace with stone wall in a 1959 tri-level, Delaware.

designed striking residences for the southern California landscape. More than 2,500 MCM houses were built in Palm Springs by one builder alone, who worked with prominent architects.

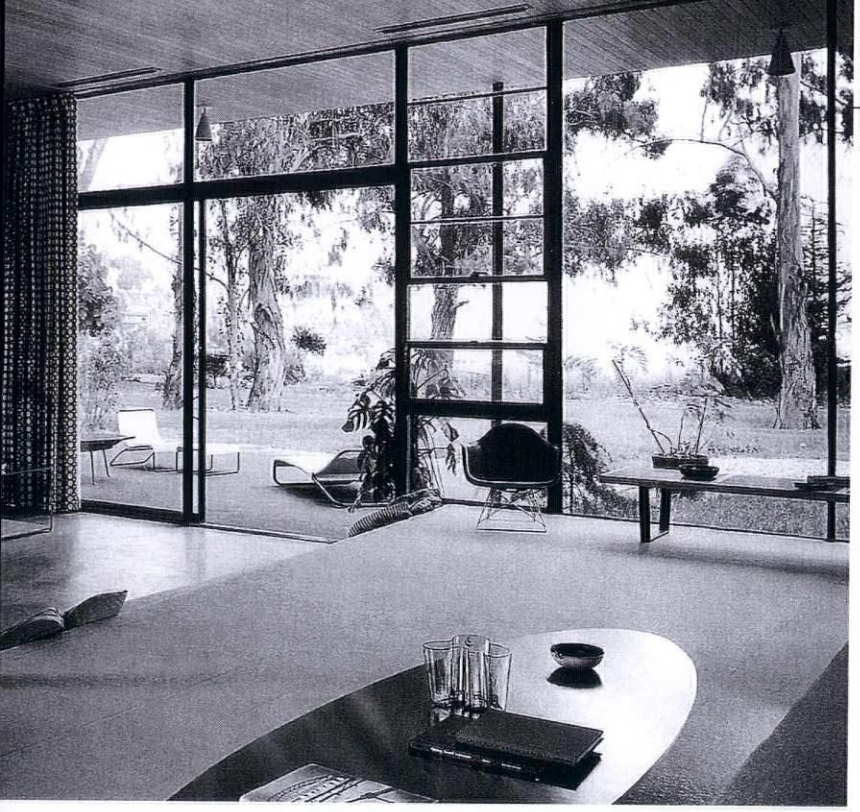
Mid-century Modern enclaves are found all over the country, however, many of them with architect-designed houses. The drawing on p. 86, for example, is based on a house by architect Ralph Haver, who practiced in the Phoenix, Arizona, area starting in 1945.

What about Ranch houses? As developed by Cliff May as early as 1932, the California Ranch is a recognized style under the Mid-century Modern umbrella. The postwar ranch, the split-level, and the A-frame are forms, not necessarily styles. Many ranches embodied 1950s modernism, but others were "traditional." The term Atomic Ranch is used for somewhat streamlined, space-age ranches with futuristic references and an embrace of new materials like plywood and laminates.

The best houses reveal what the lesser suburban houses were trying to emulate. Inspiration lies in amoeboid pools and generous patios, flat masonry fireplace walls and raised hearths, low-slung furniture, monochromatic carpeting, and open architecture. Restoration-minded householders are buying up Ranches and MCM houses (not all of them stellar examples) to remake them, with the gift of hindsight, to be better than they were. That's just what happened with Arts & Crafts Bungalows.

MODERN *Domestic Interiors*

Spanning 40 years and with so many houses, decorating is bound to be varied: academic, traditional, atomic kitsch. Today's owners can choose from the best design of the era; start with the decade when the house was built. In the Forties, for example, traditionalists leaned toward French design; Modernists took a cue from Italian, Scandinavian, and British innovators. Some interiors have a sumptuous Hollywood feeling, while other houses are spare and austere with Modern furnishings. The Fifties and Sixties are familiar still, with their grasscloth, laminate countertops, and mosaic tile. Unadorned wood paneling and furniture might be pale (maple, beech) or dark (teak). MCM furniture is available as still-affordable antiques and as reissues by Herman Miller, Knoll, and others, with catalog companies such as Design Within Reach selling direct to consumers. Furniture by Bertoia, Breuer, the Eameses, Le Corbusier, Platner, Saarinen, and more remain in production.



MODERN BOOKSHELF

- **MID-CENTURY MODERN by Judith Miller (Mitchell Beazley 2018)** Aimed at both collectors and decorators, the book covers late 1930s through 1960s furniture and furnishings: Bauhaus and American, Scandinavian,and Italian.
- **CASE STUDY HOUSES by Elizabeth A.T. Smith (Taschen 2016)** "Modernism to the masses . . . affordable postwar homes" created by luminaries including Neutra, Eames, and Saarinen for a program sponsored by *Arts & Architecture* magazine 1945–1966. Showing 36 model houses, most in Southern California, that redefined the home.

See also Taschen's Basic Architecture series with separate volumes on the architecture of Richard Neutra, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, the Bauhaus, etc.

- **MID-CENTURY MODERN COMPLETE by Dominic Bradbury (Abrams 2014)** Excellent introduction and overview of the design movement from Palm Springs to Long Island, Japan to Scandinavia, including 20 seminal houses and reference guides.
- **TOTAL DESIGN: ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIORS OF ICONIC MODERN HOUSES by George H. Marcus (Rizzoli 2014)** Visit masterpieces of Modern design from Arts & Crafts-era practitioners (Wright, Greene & Greene, C.R. Mackintosh) through van der Rohe, Saarinen, Aalto, Ponti, and beyond.
- **MIDCENTURY HOUSES TODAY by Jaffrey Matz and Cristina A. Ross et al (Monacelli Press 2014).** Exploring the concentration of residential modernism in the NYC suburb New Canaan, Conn., during the 1940s–50s, with houses by Philip Johnson, Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, Edward Durell Stone, and others.
- **CAPE COD MODERN: MIDCENTURY ARCHITECTURE . . . ON THE OUTER CAPE by Peter McMahon and Christine Cipriani (Metropolis Books 2014).** Exploring the legacy of an experimental, regional modernism left by Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and a cadre of Bauhaus thinkers and East Coast intellectuals.
- **FORGOTTEN MODERN: CALIFORNIA HOUSES 1940–1970 by Alan Hess (Gibbs Smith 2007).** Primary examples of early residential modernism, variants on minimalism, and the endurance of organic architecture (which was once referred to as "unchecked emotionalism" by Eero Saarinen).
- **EICHLER: MODERNISM REBUILDS THE AMERICAN DREAM by Paul Adamson and Marty Arbunich (Gibbs Smith 2002).** Innovative, then-affordable houses by the pioneering developer of residential suburbs in the 1950s–60s in California.

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MODERN styles

Bypassing types such as the split-level, the ranch, and the A-frame, consciously Modern-design houses seem to fall into three broad stylistic categories by mid-century.



CONTEMPORARY, the label used in the mid-century period, still defines postwar houses that have enjoyed more general appeal. Many Eichler houses, like this one, are Contemporary.



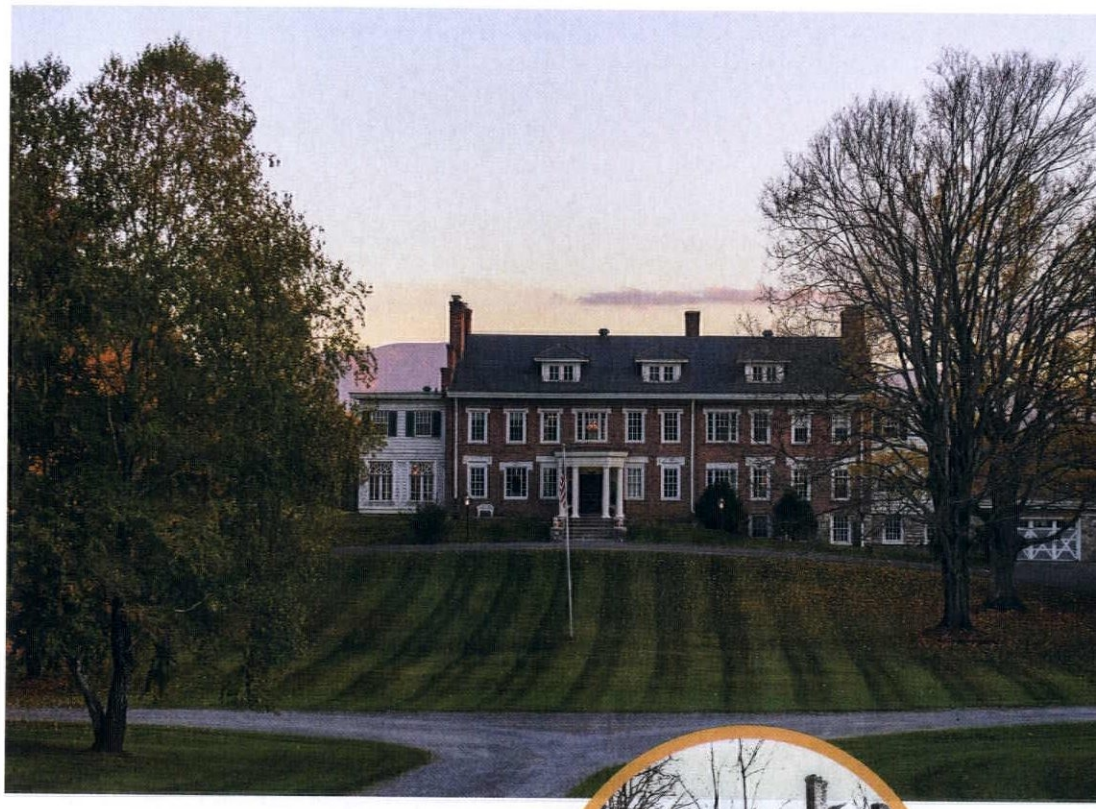
INTERNATIONAL STYLE These are the stripped-down, machine-age houses of Schindler, Neutra, and later the Bauhaus emigres. (This depicts the Gropius House in Massachusetts.) Look for a flat roof and planes, stucco, and grouped windows.

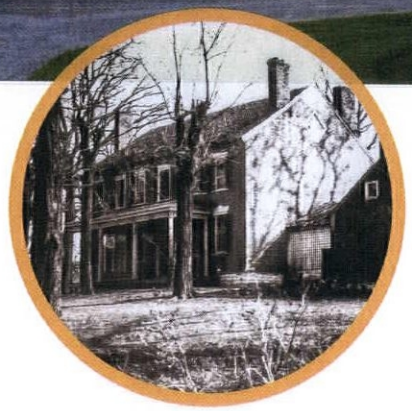


ORGANIC Like Wright's Walker House in Carmel, these Modern houses respond to the surroundings with local materials and non-rectilinear shapes.



The front door today leads into an imposing hall rising two storeys. The walls resemble stone blocks; woodwork was imported from England. The homeowners solved a ceiling problem by installing pressed metal panels in a gold finish that beautifully reflects the light after dark.





TOP On the stately front of the house, the portico reflects its Federal-period origins. To the left is the solarium added in 1916. A billiard room occupies the opposite end of the main floor. The house was first enlarged in 1812; the inset shows it ca. 1900.

AT THE SOUTHERN END of the Shenandoah Valley in western Virginia, Route 11 leads through picturesque and verdant countryside. Turn onto Houston Tavern Lane to see a view that gladdens the hearts of lovers of old houses: A substantial red-brick manor house stands at the apex of a circular drive, complete with stepped-back chimneys at either end, dormers in the slate roof, and a Federal portico with reeding and dentil mouldings. The James River flows behind the house and the Blue Ridge is its dramatic backdrop.

Forest Oaks

Built in 1806 as a side-hall house with a tavern, this dwelling became a manor after additions in 1812 and, significantly, in 1916. **BY REGINA COLE / PHOTOS BY GRIDLEY + GRAVES**

The view didn't exist when owners Cliff DeVito and Chris Walker bought the property in 2011. "It was so overgrown, you couldn't see the house from the top of the drive," Walker says. The foreclosed house was abandoned. "People who lived nearby didn't even know the house was here. Now, cars drive past, stop, back up, and come down the driveway for a look."

The original house was built in 1806 by Matthew Houston, whose cousin Sam Houston famously ended up in Texas. A tavern and a dry-goods store operated from the front room. Houston called the house Vine Forest, but it came to be known as Forest Tavern. Houston added to his house in 1812. He installed a barrel-vaulted ceiling to echo the shape of the Natural Bridge, a local landmark.

The house changed hands several times, but remained structurally the same until 1916, when Curtis Walton and his Aunt Lily came from Cleveland, bought what was still a Federal house, and transformed it into their fantasy of an English country estate. They added a wood-frame solarium and a billiard room, one at each end, and more bedrooms, enlarging the house into a 32-room mansion measuring 11,000 square feet. Their most dramatic renovation was the installation of an oak Jacobean staircase that likely came from an English manor. They built three cottages on the 50-acre property and





ABOVE When Matthew Houston built this house, it had a side hall and the main room functioned as a tavern and dry-goods store. Houston enlarged the house in 1812, making it grand with a central staircase crowned with a barrel-vaulted ceiling. **RIGHT** The Blue Room parlor was added as a library in 1812. **LEFT** Carved, English oak woodwork added a century later satisfied the early-20th-century owner's yearning for a grand British manor. That era's Jacobean staircase is a highlight, as is the newer, burnished-gold metal ceiling.





The dining room holds furniture collected over many years, including a ca. 1800 Massachusetts sideboard. Dining chairs are revivals of the 1870s. The table is English mahogany.



ABOVE The Gunston Room is part of the section added in 1812. The fireplace shows Federal restraint, and Thibaut's 'Newman' wallpaper echoes the period's favored pinks and blues. **OPPOSITE** (btm.left) The Jacobean oak staircase came from English manor house. It divides on the second floor as hallways head in opposite directions. (right) The Stratford Room, which dates to the house's construction in 1806, has its original fireplace and mantel and restrained Federal crown moulding. A barley-twist bed suits the room.

installed electric wiring. Since there was no service in the rural area, Curtis Walton built a power plant.

NEARLY A CENTURY LATER, Cliff DeVito and Chris Walker were living in Arizona, but actively looking for a house they could operate as an inn. Furthermore, "we wanted to move somewhere green," says DeVito, who for years had been an antiques dealer. " We were looking primarily in New York and New England. At first, Virginia wasn't on our map."

The men were smitten by a few possibilities in the New York Adirondacks and the Massachusetts Berkshires, but nothing worked out. They'd been relying on PreservationNation.org, an arm of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"We had three criteria," DeVito explains. "We wanted a historic house, a property with an agricultural component, and a location near an attraction."

The property now called Forest Oaks was listed at PreservationNation.org, but the pictures weren't appealing and the house was overpriced. As the price dropped, however, a visit was all it took: they negotiated and moved to Virginia.

"The house was sound," Walker says. "But we had to install upgraded systems. Fortunately, we did not have to break into walls very much, as a lot of what we installed fit into existing wall cavities."

The original Federal interior almost had been gutted during the 1916 renovation, so "we decided to take the house back to its 1916 appearance," DeVito explains. Among their startling discoveries was the solarium, which later had been divided into three small rooms. "In the 1970s, someone had covered the windows and the ceiling with pine paneling," DeVito says. "We had no idea that the beautiful arched windows and coffered ceiling even existed."

In 1916, the walls of the stair hall were scored to resemble ashlar. In the 1960s, those walls were painted flat white, making the "stone blocks" invisible. Careful painting restored the look of stone and recessed mortar. In the great hall, the ceiling had been papered but now needed work. The owners installed pressed metal ceiling panels ordered with a fine, factory-applied finish in deep gold, a decision made for the material's low-maintenance properties as well as its evocation of old Jacobean strapwork ceilings.

"It glows at night," Cliff DeVito says.



THE LIVING ROOM retained its original fireplace mantel, but English oak woodwork that was added remade it as an early-20th-century room. Today's owner, an antiques dealer, collected furniture with an eye to furnishing a large inn.

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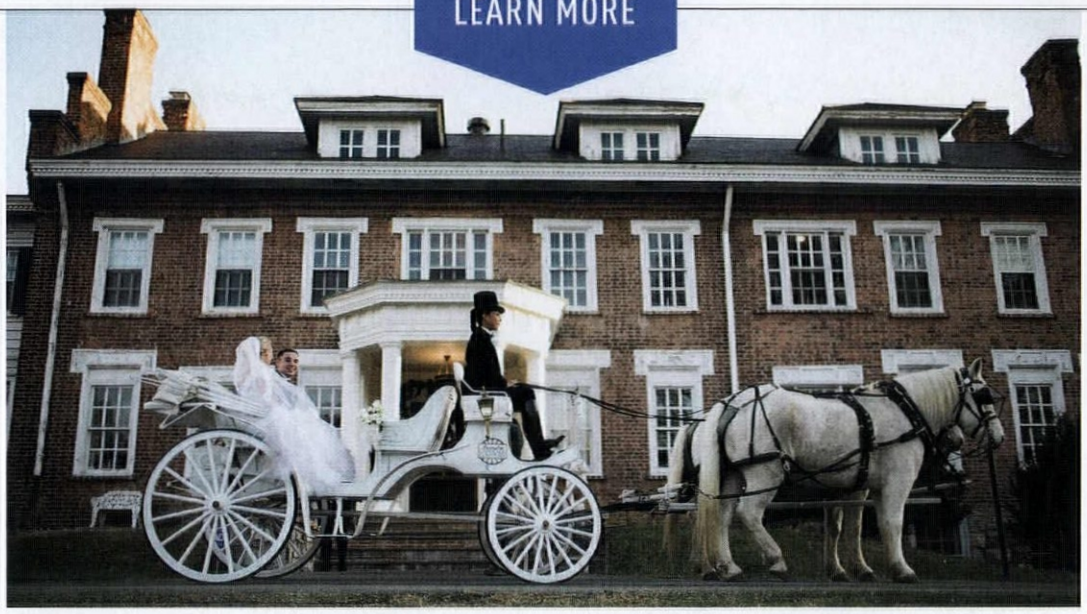
Another Federal that has seen change: **oldhouseonline.com/articles/country-federal-keeps-tradition**

THE SOLARIUM was added in 1916. It was later divided into three rooms, its lovely windows and ceiling covered with 1970s paneling. Restored to Colonial Revival elegance, it is now a favorite room of owners and guests.





LEARN MORE



MAKING THE HOUSE PAY FOR ITSELF

RESIDENT OWNERS SHARE THE WEALTH TO AFFORD THEIR DREAM HOUSE. By Regina Cole

Like English aristocrats renting out their castles on Airbnb, Americans who covet a stately historic house may look for it to provide income. Vacation rentals have never been more popular; other homeowners rent for weddings and fund-raisers, or to the producers of movies and commercials.

When Chris Walker and Cliff DeVito were hunting for the right house, they knew that it should be big enough to serve as a bed-and-breakfast inn. At Forest Oaks in Virginia, they saw the ideal property for not only renting out rooms, but also for other income, allowing them to live in this gorgeous house.

"With only six bedrooms to let, we knew we had to have a multi-faceted approach," Walker says. "Our separate cottages are a wonderful plus. In the house, we can't accommodate pets or children, but the cottages can, and they're very popular. We're doing well with lodging: we have bookings into 2021." The cottages, he says, are in demand year-round. The rooms in the big house, on the other hand, see a huge surge on holidays.

"I was surprised by how big all of Valentine's week is, as well as the demand for New Year's Eve. At Forest Oaks, we provide a quiet getaway, not a raucous party."

Walker and DeVito have made barter an important element in their economy. "We lend the pastures to local farmers who make hay. We make no money, but it keeps the fields mowed and keeps us in farm products or services. We also barter with the local tree person: he cuts our trees to keep them from hanging over the house, and he keeps the wood."

The owners have developed an extensive financial strategy. "We have done weddings and other private parties, although that can be tricky; it's awkward if a wedding is going on in which other guests have no part," DeVito says. "So we fill the schedule carefully, timing for lodging or a wedding, but not both."

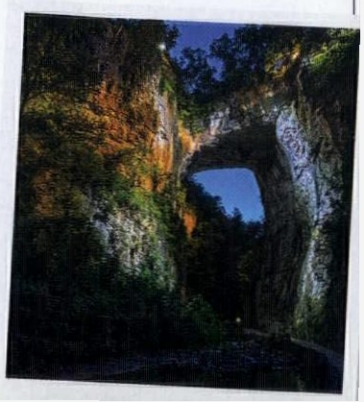
They're planning to host murder-mystery weekends to include candlelit dinners and scavenger hunts among local businesses. Wine-pairing meals, organized along themes, will be catered, as will the murder-mystery meals.

The two also plan to convert the original basement kitchen into a bakery run by DeVito, who trained as a pastry chef. "We'll bake cakes, pies, pastries, brioche—at first for our guests, but as we produce more, we'll sell baked goods through local farmers' markets and to restaurants."

The basement once held the servants' hall. That area is becoming an antiques store open to guests, and to the public by appointment. For years, Walker has collected costume jewelry from the 1920s to the 1950s, which will be featured in the basement store. Then, "we'll add a larger antiques store in what used to be the garage," he says. "That gives us space for big items."

The way to make the money work, Walker says, is to "go full steam ahead all year long. We will just keep trying things to find out what works."

Walker and DeVito praise the Conservation Fund. (This is a non-profit that seeks to foster environmental preservation and economic development: conservationfund.org) "We partnered with them for our financing: they take risks that banks won't."



TOP What better place for an old-fashioned wedding? **RIGHT** The Natural Bridge has been a local attraction since Thomas Jefferson's time.



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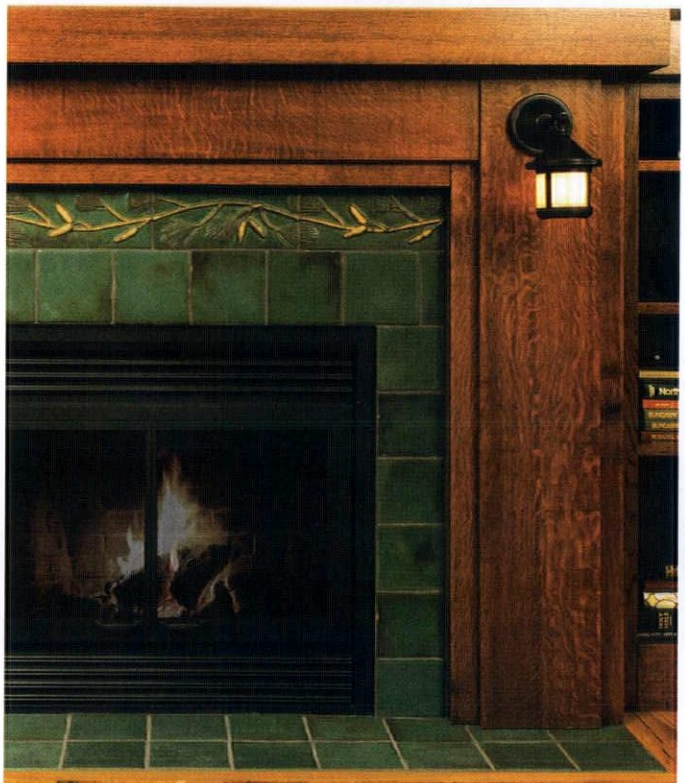
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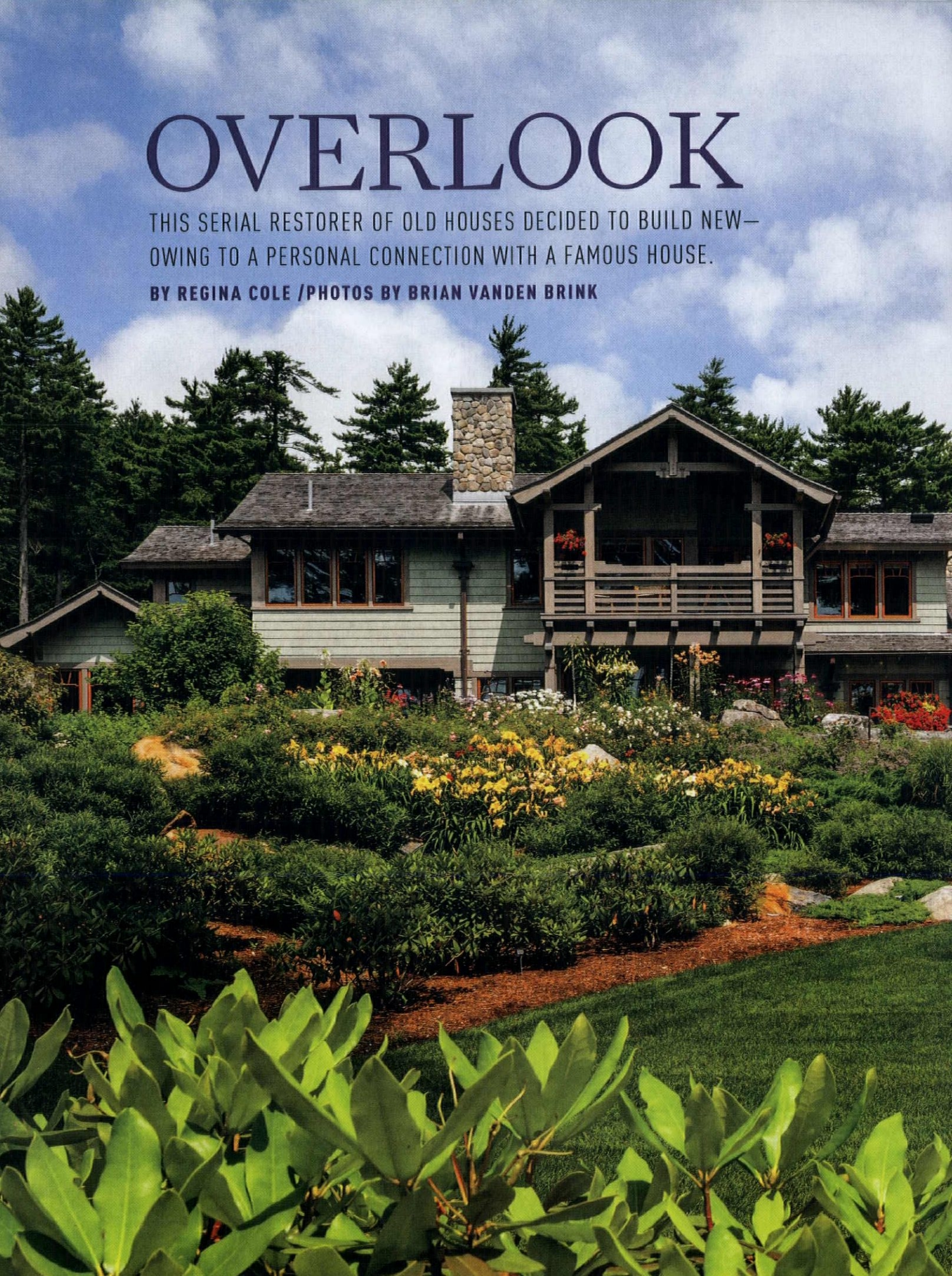


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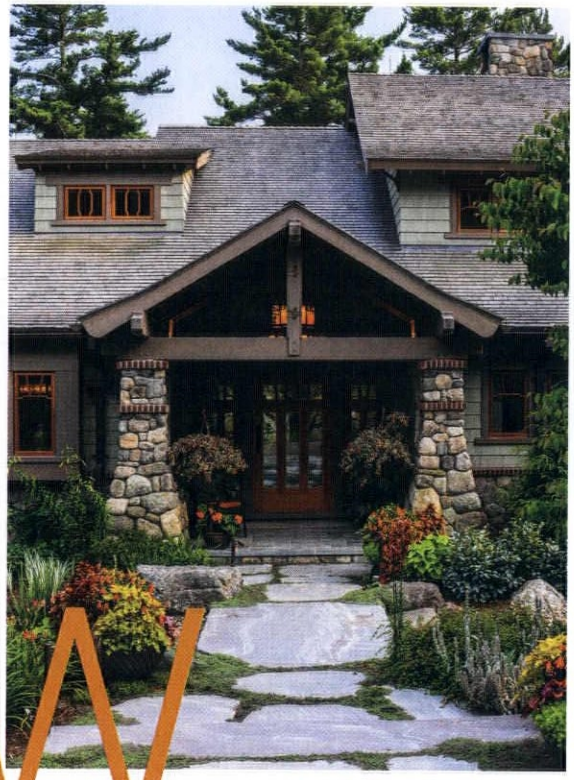
THIS SERIAL RESTORER OF OLD HOUSES DECIDED TO BUILD NEW—OWING TO A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH A FAMOUS HOUSE.

BY REGINA COLE /PHOTOS BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK



With a broad terrace on the first floor and a covered porch on the second level, the back of the house is oriented towards the distant ocean view. **INSET** Made of Douglas fir, exterior rafter tails are shorter than their California counterparts, but have the unmistakable look of Greene & Greene design, as does the bronze strapping. **RIGHT** Battered piers built of local fieldstone, rounded rafter tails, cloudlift motifs in the windows, and a stunning stained-glass front door interpret the work of Charles and Henry Greene for the East Coast.







WHEN HE WAS A BOY growing up in Pasadena, California, Dyke Messler had lunch at his grandparents' house on Sundays. "I spent Christmas and birthdays there, too," he says.

Messler's grandmother's name was Gamble. Yes: His great-grandparents were David and Mary Gamble, who had commissioned the architects Greene & Greene to design their winter residence, which was built in 1908. The Gamble House is a masterpiece of Arts & Crafts residential architecture, one of the houses by Greene & Greene referred to as "ultimate bungalows."

But for Messler, the cozy house was just "my grands'. They let us run and explore, nothing was off-limits to us kids." He says the house, with its exquisite exposed joinery and craftsmanship, and its Japanese-inspired design, became a discovery experience for him.

Following the death of their parents in 1966, Messler's mother and her five siblings gave the house jointly to the City of Pasadena and the University of Southern California School of Architecture. Messler went East to attend college, then moved to rural Vermont, where he bought and restored a ca. 1820 Cape. Finding Vermont too isolated, he then moved to coastal Maine, where he bought and restored a series of old houses.



LEFT A water feature makes a pleasant splashing sound and adds to the drama of the gardens. The backdrop is a view of Penobscot Bay seen through the old white pines. **BELOW** Designed to double as a third bedroom, the owner's home office has a reproduction tiger-maple secretary and a rare Steinway player piano—connected to a computer interface, so the music selection is endless. **OPPOSITE** Under a vaulted wood ceiling, the dining room is dramatic with a dining table designed in the shape of a *tsuba*, or Japanese sword guard.

The vaulted dining room is full of **exquisite artisan details:** stained and leaded glass, custom-made furniture, and a focal-point fireplace wall incorporating local stone. Glass-front cabinets lit from within hold a collection of rose-medallion china, assembled over 40 years.

The Art & Craft of STONE

In building his homage to Greene & Greene, Dyke Messler used nine types of wood, including maple for the kitchen cabinets and flooring. This house is about stone craft, too. The array—23 different varieties—boggles the mind.

GUEST HOUSE • kitchen counters **Silver Cream Granite** (Africa) • sink **Absolute Black Granite** (India) • linen room **Silver Sea Green Granite** (Saudi Arabia) • stove hearth/panels **Indus Gold Limestone** (Pakistan) **MAIN HOUSE** • kitchen, dining, nook, pantry **Splendor Granite** (Brazil) • kitchen pass-through/sink **Cabernet Brown Granite** (Brazil) • laundry **Colonial Gold Granite** (India) • floors **Vermont Green Slate** (USA) • guest bath **Nettuno Bordeaux Granite** (Brazil) • bathroom floors **Crema Marfil Marble** (Spain) • powder room **Onice Arco Iris Onyx** (Iran) • sunroom floor **Norumbega® Flagstone** (USA) • library fireplace **Cosmic Gold Granite** (Brazil) • dining fireplace **Maine fieldstone** (USA) • pool bath trim **Heritage Valley Granite** (Maine, USA) • pool bath walls **Super White Quartzite** (Brazil) • office bath **Four Seasons Granite** (Brazil) • office bath apron/shelf **Minas Soapstone** (Brazil) • office sink **Black Granite** (USA) • master bath **Jurassic Green Granite** (Brazil) **Ming Green Marble** (China) • game room **Kenya Black Marble** (Africa) • mudroom **Colonial Gold Granite** (India)





THE ART OF STONE
A frame of Splendor Granite from Brazil artfully surrounds local granite fieldstones to clad the chimney breast in the dining room.

More Online

See this owner's 1809 house: **oldhouseonline.com/articles/visiting-a-landmark-federal-style-house-in-maine**







ABOVE The horizontal lines favored by Greene & Greene are evident in a view of the patio outside the back door. An upstairs porch recalls the sleeping porches of the Pasadena houses. **LEFT** The porch off the upstairs master bedroom is not used for sleeping, but for watching sailboats on the bay. **BOTTOM** Located at one end of the house, the Japanese-inspired outdoor shower is a favorite amenity used after a swim in the pool.

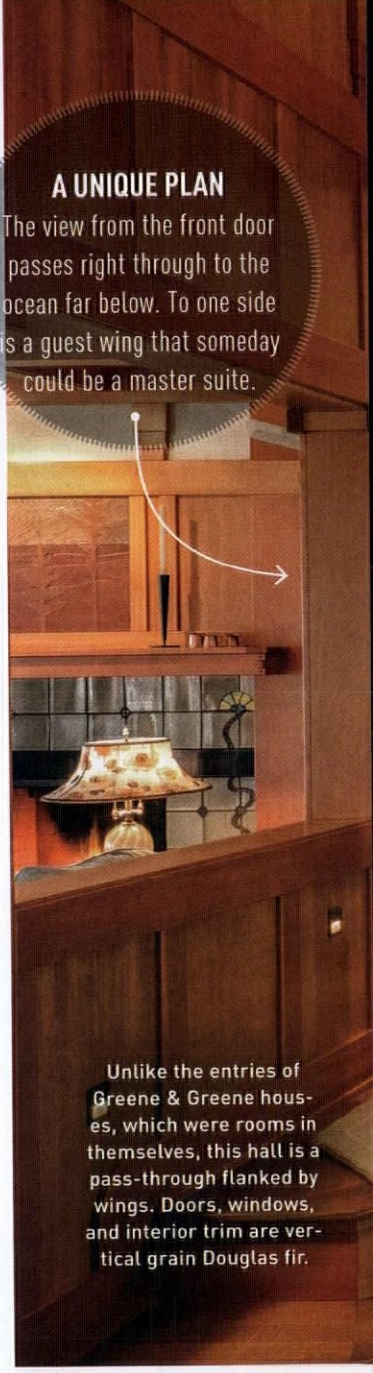
When Messler acquired a spectacular piece of land halfway up a mountain overlooking Penobscot Bay, he decided to build a home that would pay homage to his grandparents' house. Working with Belfast, Maine, architect Dominic Paul Mercadante, Dyke Messler sought to create a 21st-century, East Coast version of the designs of Charles and Henry Greene.

"Dominic and I have worked together for 25 years," Messler says. "This is our sixth project. It had to be interpetive; the Greenes' houses were created for the Mediterranean climate of Southern California, and the interiors tend to be dark. I took the liberty of using lighter woods, and we shortened the rafter tails in eave overhangs to allow more sunlight to enter. The roof line is steeper to shed snow." Messler adds that, while Greene & Greene sheathed their houses in redwood shakes, he chose red cedar, stained lichen green to approximate the Gamble House color.

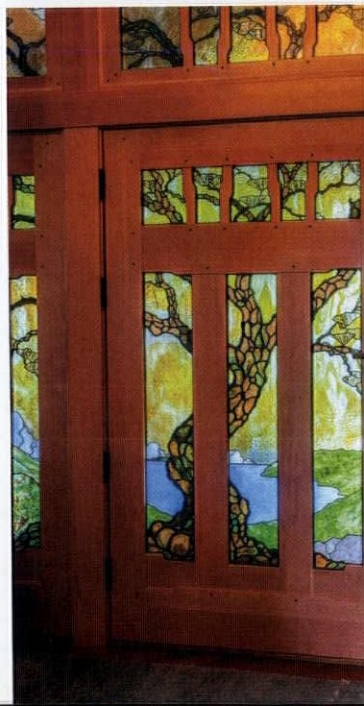
He and Mercadante started the project in 2008—with a 2,000-square-foot guest house. "We wanted to get a sense of the joinery details, and the cost," Messler explains. "Fortunately, Maine is loaded with very talented builders, so we worked with people who knew woodwork—but who were happy to be pushed

A UNIQUE PLAN

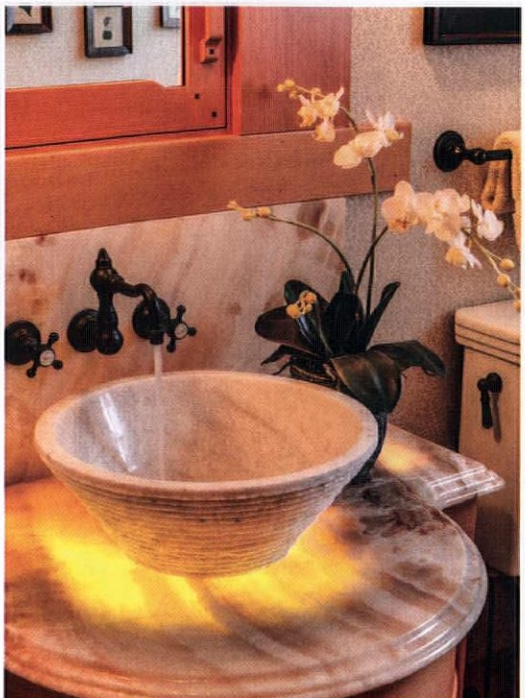
The view from the front door passes right through to the ocean far below. To one side is a guest wing that someday could be a master suite.

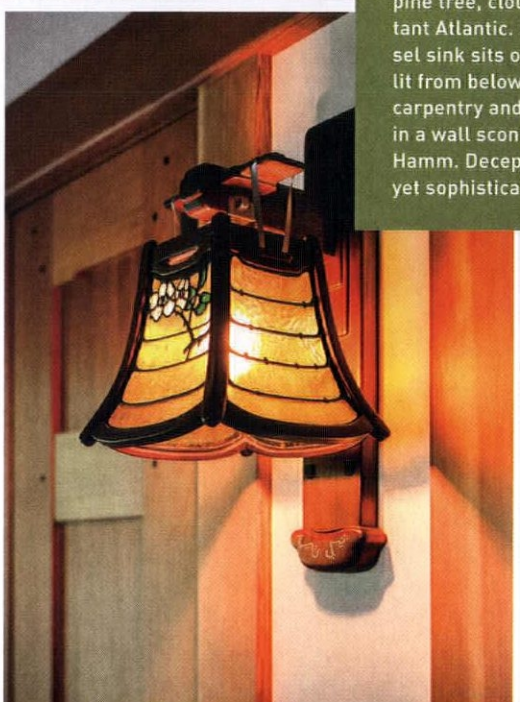


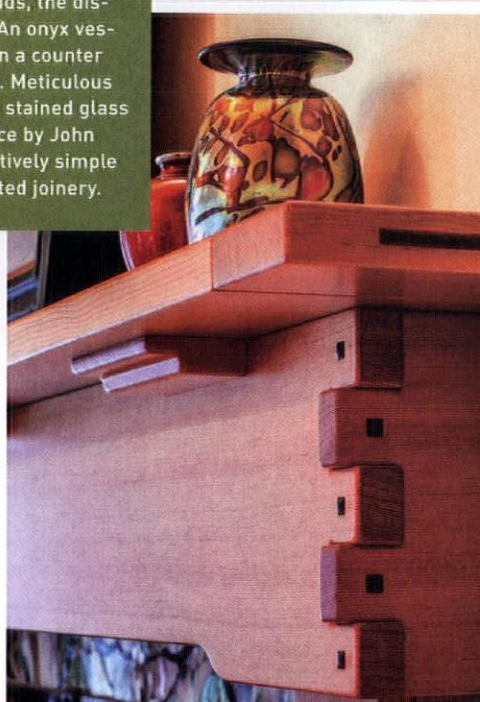
Unlike the entries of Greene & Greene houses, which were rooms in themselves, this hall is a pass-through flanked by wings. Doors, windows, and interior trim are vertical grain Douglas fir.









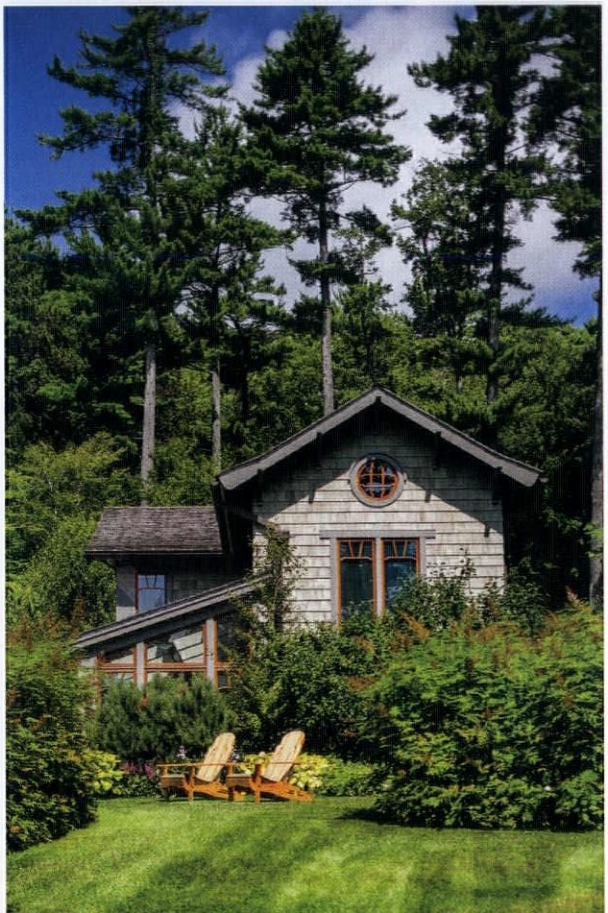


LEFT TO RIGHT Based on the famous Gamble House doors, the entry in Maine interprets local imagery: pine tree, clouds, the distant Atlantic. An onyx vessel sink sits on a counter lit from below. Meticulous carpentry and stained glass in a wall sconce by John Hamm. Deceptively simple yet sophisticated joinery.





Stone terracing created gardens, a pool, and a pond fed by hillside runoff. The guest house at left, opposite the front door, was built first.



to this high level of craftsmanship. Greene & Greene's work is nothing short of brilliant. In the joinery, for example, surfaces are rounded and polished, joints are pillowed and exposed."

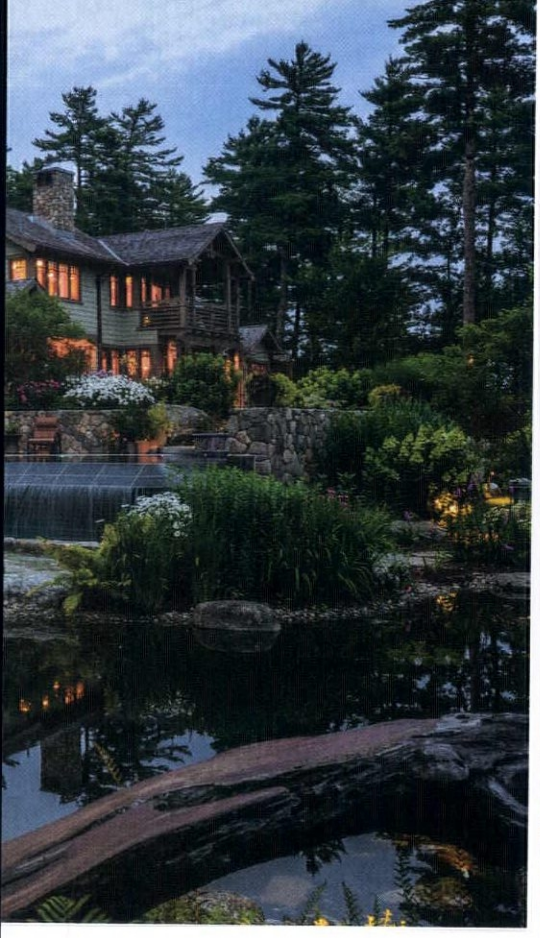
By 2010, Messler and Mercadante could move on to the 6,000-square-foot main house, which was completed 26 months later. "The Gamble House, which is about one-third larger, was completed in nine months at a cost of about $75,000, including the furnishings," Messler report. "This one cost a bit more!"

Renowned glass artist John Hamm of Whittier, California, interpreted the design of Gamble House's front doors for Maine, selecting motifs of a pine tree, clouds, and the ocean. The front hall is based on that of the Culbertson House, another of Greene & Greene's Pasadena houses. Dominic Mercadante designed a staircase that incorporates the favored cloudlift motif, also found on the windows. Charles Greene collected *tsuba*, Japanese sword guards; they became the inspiration for escutcheons made for all the doors and for the shape of the mahogany dining table.

A patio, multi-level gardens, an infinity-edge pool, a waterfall, a stone barbecue area, and a pond surround the house. Like its West Coast inspirations, Overlook appears to be rooted in the ground, rather than plunked down upon it. "Interpreting the Greene's work is tricky business," Messler admits. "More than one new version has failed because it was simply overdone. Ted Bosley, executive director of the Gamble House, was full of praise for this house. That, to me, is the supreme compliment!"

TOP LEFT Built first to test the waters for local craftsmanship and to gauge the cost of the whole project, the open-plan guest house is a retreat with many elements similar to those in the main house.
LEFT The guest house nestles into the landscape.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 119.





RIGHT The master bedroom's fireplace surround (with nearly 700 pieces of glass) has a wisteria design by glass artist John Hamm, installed by his wife, Kori Capaldi. The copper hood is by local metal artist Andrew Stancioff.





BELOW The closet/dressing room in the master suite provides storage without the need for additional chests or closets in the bedroom, another hallmark of the Greenes' work. The finish carpenters announced they'd be "happy to live in the closet!"



ABOVE Maine artist Susan Amons painted the mural in the master bathroom. **LEFT** Messler's partner, Rickey Celentano, wanted an office and private space adjacent to the master bedroom. Doors pick up the wisteria motif in panels designed by John Hamm.

THE CALL OF THE EAST

DETECTING ASIAN INFLUENCE IN THE WORK OF GREENE & GREENE. By David Mathias

In Japanese, a term expresses the ultimate in beautiful design: *shibusa* (*shibusa* is the noun form while *shibui* is the adjectival form). Not surprisingly, it is a term that doesn't translate easily, as attested to by the broad range of English definitions. Described variously as calm understatement, or quiet, sober refinement, severe exquisiteness, or interesting beauty, it is an important concept in Japanese aesthetics.

There is no evidence that Charles and Henry Greene were familiar with the concept of *shibusa*. It does not, for example, appear in Edward Morse's *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings,* a book Charles Greene owned. It is possible that they had encountered it; however, what seems more likely is that they understood the idea, were sympathetic to the view, without having been exposed to it. One thing of which we can be certain is that much of the work of Greene & Greene is *shibui*. Whether they were actually influenced by knowledge of *shibusa* is a moot point, for their work demonstrates sensitivity to the concept and, by extension, to Japanese aesthetics.

When viewing the server from the Freeman Ford house or the dining table from the Gamble house, phrases such as "simple without being crude, austere without being severe" certainly come to mind. The entire Blacker house is a study in "refinement that gives spiritual joy."

Integrated design is also a familiar theme in the Arts & Crafts movement. Arts & Crafts designers typically strove for a level of simplicity and used themes from nature, both *shibui* attributes. Further, elements drawn from nature were often used in highly stylized form as in the Japanese/Chinese cloud scrolls and mist symbol and in many Stickley inlays as well as those in much of the furniture in the Greenes' Blacker house.

In both philosophies, a strong interest in, or even devotion to, the selection and use of materials was a key element. Both share a reverence for labor and the process of creation. While more formal in Japan, this idea was one of the cornerstones for the founders of Arts & Crafts in England. There, this was seen as a return to the medieval guild system, while in Japan there was no need for a return as the system had changed very little over time.

Charles Greene's propensity for very direct involvement in the implementation of his designs is well known. In some cases Charles insisted that workers dismantle portions of projects and redo them. Charles is said to have chosen stones for placement, presumably at the stone's request. That the Greenes, Charles in particular, were influenced by Japan is indisputable. One needn't have formal training in design to detect Asian elements in the brothers' work.

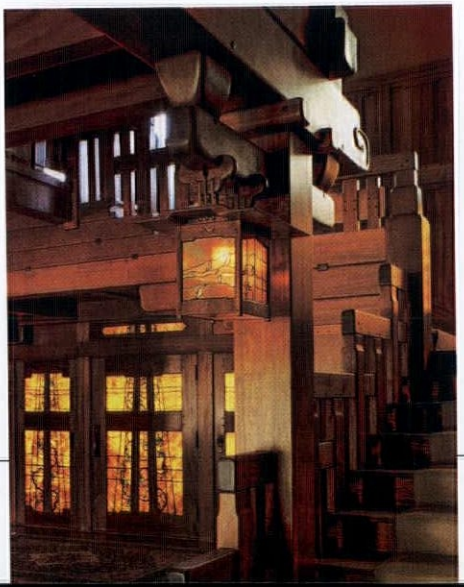
The Chinese influence is sometimes overlooked. It can be difficult to distinguish the two: Many aspects of Japanese culture can be traced to China, though only by traveling through many centuries of history. After appearing in Japan, the forms followed independent evolutionary paths. The most common distinction given, though a simplification, is that the Greenes were influenced by Japanese architecture and Chinese furniture.

Chinese furniture is viewed as small-scale architecture. "Each piece of furniture is a form of architecture in miniature with walls, joinery, and an implicit duty to serve human activity. Each example is made from wood, has a rhythm, and is an act of beauty," writes art historian Sarah Handler. In Chinese, the words for building framing (*da muzuo*, or large carpentry) and furniture making (*xiao muzuo*, or small carpentry) are quite similar, further illustrating the connection between structures and furniture.

Japanese Influence

Buildings with planar massing and horizontal elements recall Japanese architecture. These tenets of Japanese design are easy to see in the work of Greene & Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright. —**Brian D. Coleman**

1. FUKINSEI 不均整 (IMBALANCE) Asymmetry and irregularity are favored, as symmetry and perfection do not occur in nature. **Translation:** Group objects in clusters of three or five. • **2. KANSO 簡素 (SIMPLICITY)** Elimination of unnecessary ornament is important to keep things truthful. **Translation:** Eliminate clutter. • **3. KOKOU 枯高 (AUSTERITY)** Basic, weathered and aged, essential materials are best as they evoke maturity. **Translation:** Use natural stone, brick, and wood. • **4. SEIJAKU 静寂 (CALMNESS)** Silence and tranquility are important for one's mind and surroundings. **Translation:** Incorporate areas for thought and reflection: a chair by the fireplace, a bench in the garden. • **5. YUGEN (幽玄) (SUGGESTION)** Imply there is more by not showing everything. **Translation:** Don't display everything you own all at once.



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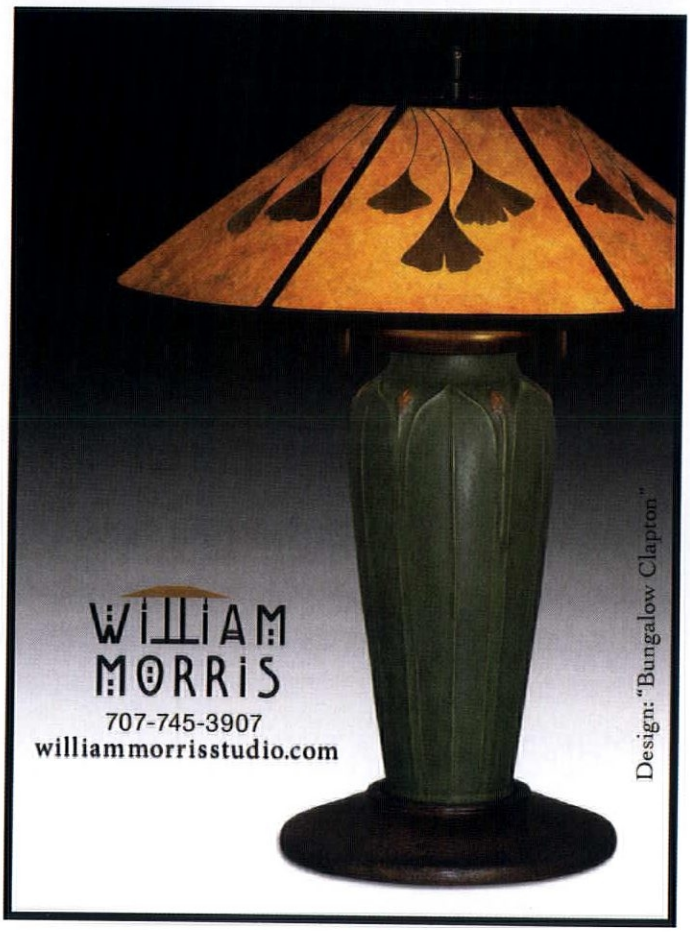
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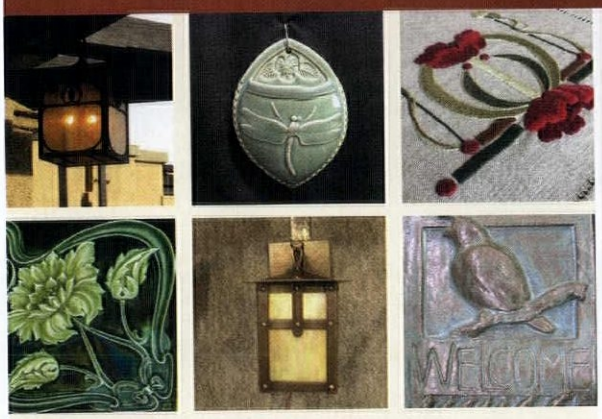


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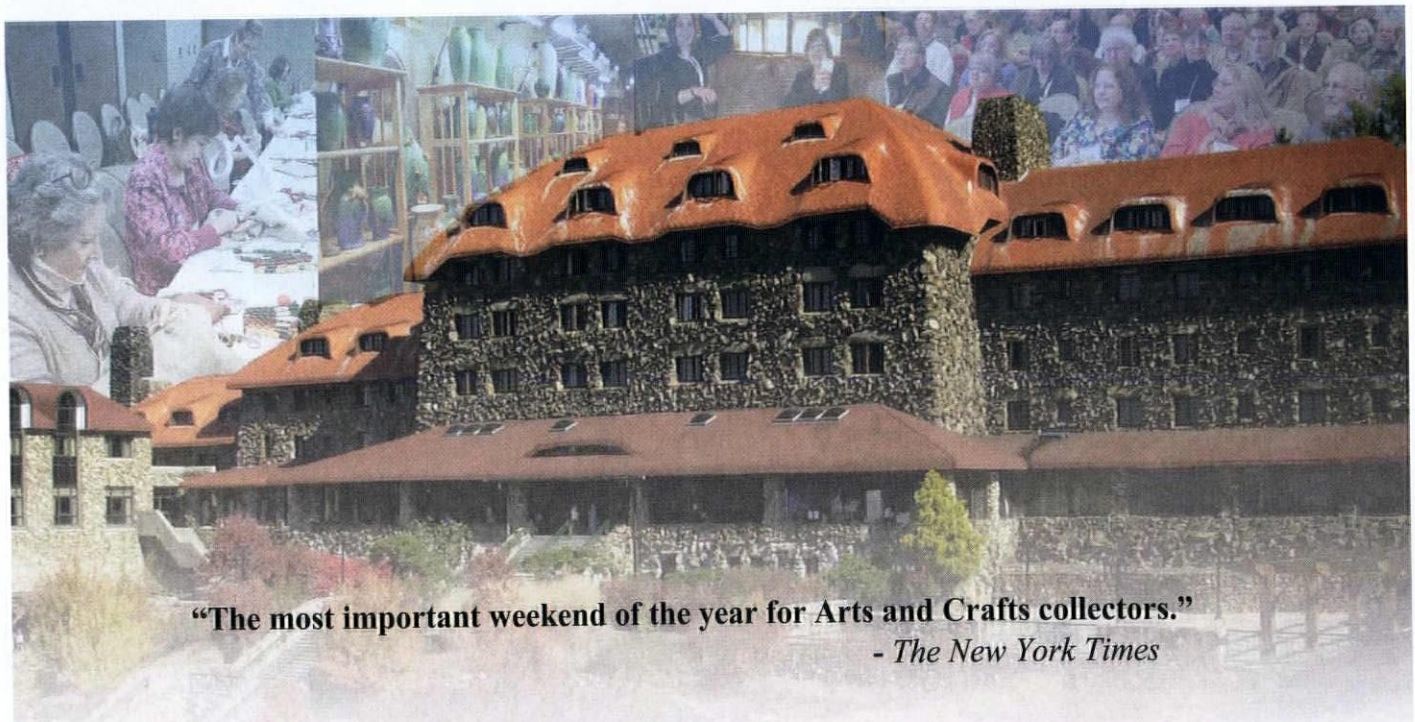
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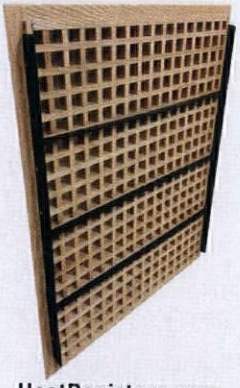
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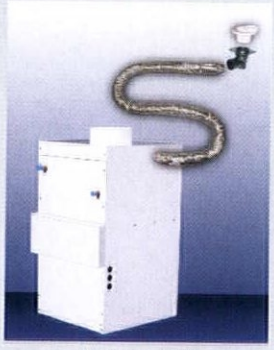
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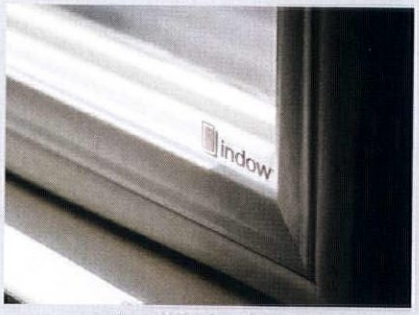
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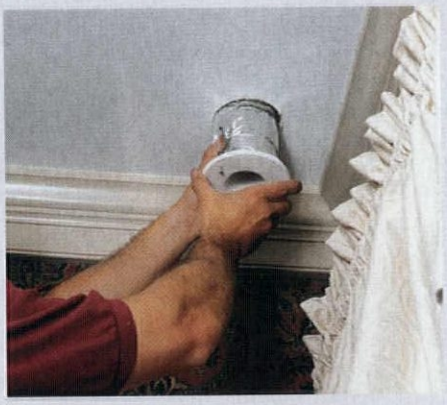
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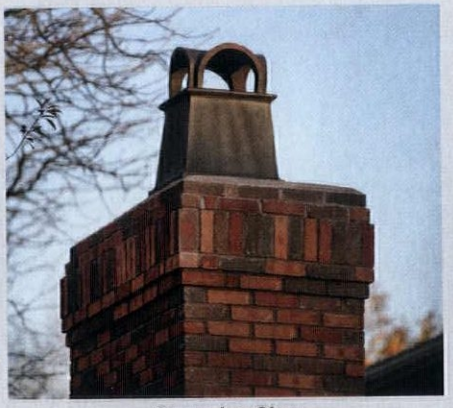
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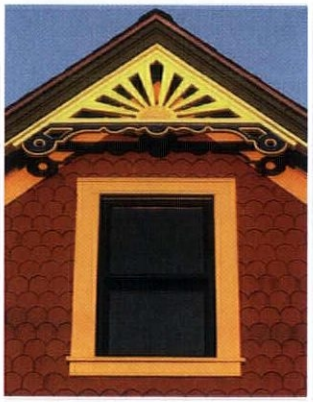
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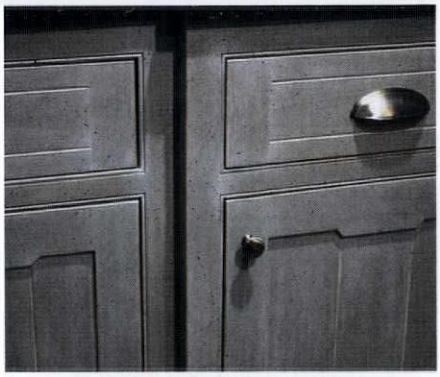
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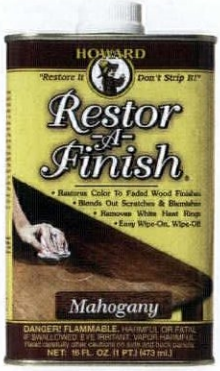
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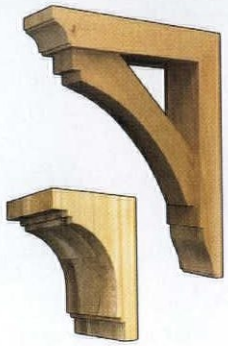
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p. 90 **FAUX PAINTING** Tom Thomas, **Fine Line Architectural Detailing** finelinearchdetail.com **TIN CEILING** **American Tin Ceilings** americantinceilings.com

p. 92 **PAINT** 'American Spirit' Clark + Kensington, **Ace Hardware** stores **CHANDELIER** **Hinkley Lighting** hinkleylighting.com **DRAPERY** **Antique Gatherings**, Phoenix: antiquegatherings.com

p. 93 **PAINT** trim 'Cachet Cream' **Sherwin-Williams** sherwin-williams.com **WALLPAPER** 'Biltmore' **Thibaut** thibautdesign.com **UPHOLSTERY** **Greenhouse Fabrics** greenhousefabrics.com **DRAPERY** 'Vintage Velvet' slate blue **Restoration Hardware** restoration hardware.com

p. 94 **PAINT** trim (all bedrooms) 'Edwardian Linen' **Ralph Lauren** ralphlaurenhome.com **WALLPAPER** bedroom 'Newman' **Thibaut** thibautdesign.com • living room *unknown* **DRAPERY** 'Vintage Velvet' **Restoration Hardware** restoration hardware.com

p. 95 **PAINT** solarium walls 'Simply Peach' **Valspar** valsparpaint.com • upper hall walls 'Cornwall Slate' **Sherwin-Williams** *see above* • bedroom 'Woodlawn Colonial Gray' **Sherwin-Williams** *see above*

Related Resources

W.F. Norman wfnorman.com *Metal ceilings in original patterns*

OVERLOOK IN MAINE

ARCHITECT **Dominic Paul Mercadante**, Belfast, ME: dpmercadante.com

BUILDER John Frye, **Omni Construction**, Thomaston, ME: (207) 594-8222 • guest house **Phi Builders**, Rockport, ME: (207) 230-0034

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT Steve Mohr, **Mohr & Seredin**, Portland, ME: mohrseredin.com

LANDSCAPING **Sunset Knoll Landscaping**, Nobleboro, ME: sunsetknolllandscaping.com

STAINED-GLASS ARTIST **Hamm Art Glass** hammartglass.com

DOORS/CABINETS main house, also desk & "Chinese" bed **Ezra Howell Furniture Maker LLC,** Union, ME: (207) 785-5934

INTERIOR DESIGN **Karen Thomas Interior Design**, Camden, ME: (207) 236-3521

DECORATIVE PAINTING **Susan Amons** susanamons.com

FRENCH DOORS/WINDOWS **Marvin Windows** marvin.com

HARDWARE design **Paul Mercadante** *see above* • fabrication Elliot Lowe, **Lowe Hardware**: lowe-hardware.com • guest-house door hardware **Rocky Mountain Hardware** rocky mountainhardware.com

ADDITIONAL LIGHTING **Loten Art Lighting** lotenartlighting.com

p. 99 **FIXTURE** copper verdigris finish **Arroyo Craftsman** arroyocraftsman.com

p. 101 **FURNITURE** **Scott Chase**, Belfast, ME: (207) 322-1195 **FRIEZE PAINTING** **Jill Valliere** jillvalliere.com

p. 103 **CARVING** **Stephen Gleasner**, Appleton, ME: (207) 589-3165

Related Resources

Modern Bungalow modernbungalow.com *Everything Craftsman*

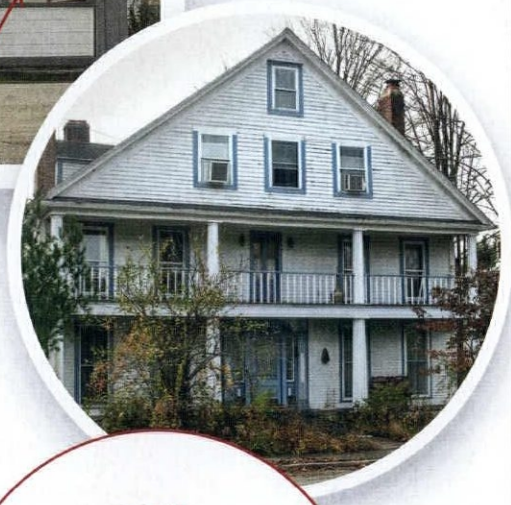
“Decisions? It’s all Greek to me.”

—Darryl Durgan





MIDDLE This poor old house has had so many features changed, it has lost all its dignity. **FAR LEFT** A hedge to the encroaching street notwithstanding, this temple-form house retains details including pretty cornice brackets and exaggerated columns. **BELOW** Benign neglect has not ruined this folk-style Greek Revival house nearby.



THE GREEK SURVIVAL

These vernacular examples of 19th-century Greek Revival houses are in a town on the Massachusetts–New Hampshire border. None is a textbook example of New World classicism—but each was a bold statement. Note the variation in columns: double-height on the most intact example, with shorter columns in the top level; stacked single-height columns on blue house; two-storey square pillars on the sad one. Uncharacteristically, all three have regular windows or doors in the overscaled “pediment,” the front-facing gable.

The remuddled house may be beyond the point of no return. The dormer with a near-flat roof is the least of it. It’s likely that this house was built with a center entry, and putting in two doors (asymmetrically) may have started the cascade of ruinous changes. All the windows have been changed, most egregiously on the lower floors. The siding is a coverup with a wider exposure than that of the original clapboards. There’s no pretense at a porch anymore, an attitude echoed in the careless placement of cable, vent, and satellite dishes.

DON’T

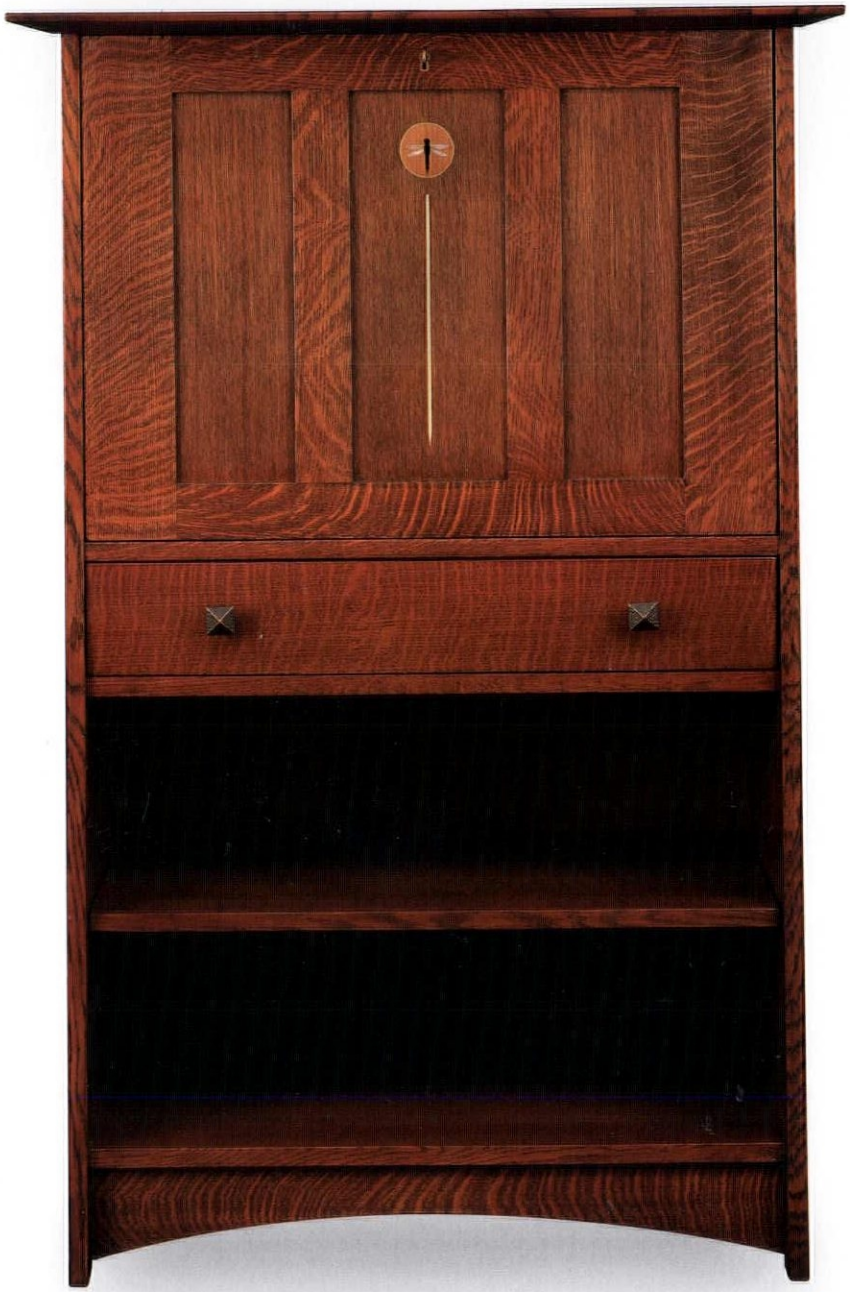
. . . ruin the fenestration! Who would choose horizontal “picture windows” to replace originals that had vertical emphasis?

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